

Theological Seminary.  
PRINCETON, N. J.  
—  
Part of the  
ADDISON ALEXANDER LIBRARY,  
which was presented by  
MESSRS. R. L. AND A. STUART.

<i>Case.</i>	Division.....
<i>Shelf.</i>	Section.....
<i>Book.</i>	No. ....

5CC  
3341



Rev. of Addison Alexander  
D.D.

v. 1<sup>st</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> respects of the  
Author.

New York July 2<sup>d</sup> 1857.

—











# PALESTINE

WITH A  
**PART OF SYRIA**  
AS IT WAS IN THE  
TIME OF CHRIST  
AND HIS  
APOSTLES.

Scale of English miles  
0 10 20 30



G R E A T S E A O R M E D I T E R R A N E A N

PROVINCE OF GALILEA

J U D A E A

S A M A R I A

G A L I L E E

S Y R I A

J E R U S A L E M

B E T H L E H E M

J E R U S A L E M

B E T H L E H E M

J E R U S A L E M

S Y R I A

J E R U S A L E M

B E T H L E H E M

S Y R I A

J E R U S A L E M

B E T H L E H E M

A

COMMENTARY,

CRITICAL, EXPOSITORY, AND PRACTICAL,

ON THE

GOSPELS OF MATTHEW AND MARK,

FOR THE USE OF

MINISTERS, THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS, PRIVATE CHRISTIANS,  
BIBLE CLASSES, AND SABBATH SCHOOLS.

BY

JOHN J. OWEN, D.D.

WITH A MAP, SYNOPTICAL INDEX, ETC.

NEW YORK:  
LEAVITT & ALLEN, 379 BROADWAY.  
1857.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1857, by  
JOHN J. OWEN,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of  
New York.

JOHN F. TROW,  
PRINTER, STEREOTYPER, AND ELECTROTYPYER,  
377 & 379 Broadway,  
New York.



## P R E F A C E .

THE series to which the present volume belongs, is designed to embrace the four Gospels and the Acts, to be followed by a Greek edition of the same portion of the New Testament, for the use of those who are acquainted with the original language. The remaining volumes will be issued without any further delay, than may result from the official labors of the author, which leave but a small portion of daily time or strength for extra labors of this kind.

The text of this volume is an exact reprint of the recent emendation of the American Bible Society, which approaches, perhaps, as near to the standard of accuracy as any edition of the English Bible extant.

In preparing the Commentary, I have derived much valuable assistance from Doddridge, Bloomfield, Alford, Meyer, Stier, Trench, Drummond, Stuart, Barnes and others, whose works are so well known and accessible to the student of God's Word. Especially does the commentary of Olshausen, now in process of republication by Messrs. Sheldon, Blakeman & Co., deserve particular mention, as constituting a vast storehouse of valuable criticism on the New Testament, mingled it is true with much that savors of German vagueness and mysticism, yet furnishing the most complete apparatus for the study of that portion of the sacred word, which has hitherto been given to the religious public. The works of Trench and Drummond, republished, the former by Messrs. Appletons, the latter by Messrs. Carters of this city, are so well known and appreciated, as to require in this connection no special notice. To Dr. Robinson's English Harmony of the Gos-

pels, I acknowledge my obligations for the data of the "Synopsis of the Life of Jesus," following this preface, and for the headings of the subjects interspersed through the Notes, which were taken by permission, with hardly any alteration, from that valuable work.

But with all these helps, and others which might be named, I feel it due to myself to state, that my main dependence, under God, has been upon the familiarity, which the critical study of the Greek for nearly a quarter of a century has given me, with the original language of the New Testament. Principles of interpretation, established and tested in the preparation of my editions of the Greek classics, have been rigidly and faithfully applied to the elucidation of the sacred pages, and as I hope not without practical utility. Much attention has been given to the precise shades of thought, imparted by particular words and idiomatic phrases, which the definitions of the Lexicon often fail to reach in all their beauty and significancy. Apparent discrepancies between the statements of the Evangelists have been harmonized, not by claiming for them exact verbal resemblances, but by showing their essential unity. The labors and journeys of our Lord in the prosecution of his ministry, I have aimed so to present, that the reader may apprehend them, in the chronological order in which they actually took place. The Synopsis of the events in his ministry will, it is hoped, prove a valuable aid, in the way of reference, to the general reader.

In giving my own views of obscure and difficult passages, I have adverted, as far as was consistent with brevity, to the opinions of others, in order that the reader may have before him the various interpretations, and judge for himself which is worthy of adoption. All technicalities have been generally avoided, in order to render the comments easy of comprehension to all. The Commentary is designed for general use, and to this my attention has been uniformly directed in its preparation. The wants of Bible classes and Sabbath schools have not been overlooked, and it is hoped that teachers and scholars, who aim at a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, will find in this volume a valuable aid to their investigations of God's Word. Although it has been my principal object to evolve the meaning of the text, yet many prac-

tical observations, and applications of truth to the common duties of life, will be found interspersed in the Commentary.

The mechanical portion of the work leaves nothing further to be desired. The pages have been *electrotyped* by Mr. John F. Trow, and the beauty and clearness of the letter show how faithfully he has applied this new and valuable improvement to the present volume. The Map has been engraved expressly for this work by Mr. Geo. E. Sherman, and is essentially that of Kiepert, Bib. Atlas, Berlin, 1854.

With these remarks I commit my work to the Christian public, hoping that it may assist those who love to resort to the "law and testimony," in rightly understanding and applying the truth, "which is able to make them wise unto salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ."

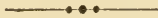
JOHN J. OWEN.

NEW YORK, *March 28th*, 1857.





# SYNOPSIS OF THE LIFE OF JESUS.



## I.

### HIS BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD.

TIME: *About thirteen and a half years.*

AN angel appears to Mary, Luke 1: 26-38; also to Joseph, Matt. 1: 18-25; Jesus born at Bethlehem, Luke 2: 1-7; his circumcision and presentation in the temple, Luke 2: 21-38; the visit of the Magi, Matt. 2: 1-12; flight into Egypt, Matt. 2: 13-23; at twelve years of age Jesus goes to the Passover, Luke 2: 41-52; his genealogy on the side of Joseph, Matt. 1: 1-17; on that of his mother, Luke 3: 22-38.

## II.

### ANNOUNCEMENT AND INTRODUCTION OF OUR LORD'S PUBLIC MINISTRY.

TIME: *About one year.*

Jesus comes to John to be baptized, Matt. 3: 13-17; Mark 1: 9-11; Luke 3: 21-23; is tempted of the devil, Matt. 4: 1-11; Mark 1: 12-13; Luke 4: 1-13; is testified to by John, John 1: 19-34; gains disciples, John 1: 35-51; attends a marriage at Cana, where he performs his first miracle, John 2: 1-11; goes down to Capernaum, John 2: 12.

## III.

### OUR LORD'S FIRST PASSOVER, AND THE EVENTS OF HIS MINISTRY UNTIL THE SECOND.

TIME: *One year.*

Jesus attends the Passover, and drives the traders out of the temple, John 2: 13-25; discourses with Nicodemus, John 3: 1-21; remains in Judea and baptizes, John 3: 22-24; is further testified to by John the Baptist, John 3: 25-36; departs into Galilee, Matt. 4: 12; Mark 1: 14; Luke 4: 14; John 4: 1-3; discourses with the woman of Samaria, John 4: 4-42; teaches in Galilee, Matt. 4: 17; Mark 1: 14, 15; Luke 4: 14, 15; John 4: 43-45; heals the son of a nobleman at Cana, John 4: 46-54; is rejected by his fellow townsmen of Nazareth, Luke 4: 16-29; takes up his abode at Capernaum, Matt. 4: 13-16; Luke 4: 30, 31; calls Peter, Andrew, James and John, at the time of the miraculous draught of fishes, Matt. 4: 18-22; Mark 1: 16-20; Luke 5: 1-11; heals a demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum, Mark 1: 21-28; Luke 4: 31-37; heals Peter's wife's mother and many others, Matt. 8: 14-17; Mark 1: 29-34; Luke 4: 38-41; goes with his disciples throughout Galilee, Matt. 4: 23-25; Mark 1: 35-39; Luke 4: 42-44; heals a leper, Matt. 8: 2-4; Mark 1: 40-45; Luke 5: 12-16; returns to Capernaum, where he heals a paralytic, Matt. 9: 2-8; Mark 2: 1-12; Luke 5: 17-26; calls Matthew, Matt. 9: 9; Mark 2: 13, 14; Luke 5: 27, 28.

## IV.

## FROM OUR LORD'S SECOND PASSOVER UNTIL THE THIRD.

TIME: *One year.*

Jesus goes up to Jerusalem to the feast of the passover, John 5: 1; heals an infirm man at the pool of Bethesda, John 5: 2-9; his discourse with the Jews consequent thereon, John 5: 10-47; on his way back to Galilee, his disciples pluck ears of grain on the sabbath, for which act he justifies them against the charge of the Pharisees, Matt 12: 1-8; Mark 2: 23-28; Luke 6: 1-5; heals a man with a withered hand on the sabbath, Matt. 12: 9-14; Mark 3: 1-6; Luke 6: 6-11; withdraws to the sea of Tiberias, whither he is followed by multitudes, Matt. 12: 15-21; Mark 3: 7-12; ascends a mountain and spends the whole night in prayer, Luke 6: 12; chooses and ordains the twelve, Matt. 10: 2-4; Mark 3: 13-19; Luke 6: 13-19; delivers the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. ch. v-vii.; Luke 6: 20-49; heals the centurion's servant at Capernaum, Matt. 8: 5-13; Luke 6: 1-10; raises the widow's son at Nain, Luke 7: 11-17; receives a message from John the Baptist, Matt. 11: 2-6; Luke 7: 18-23; discourses with the multitude respecting John, Matt. 11: 7-19; Luke 7: 24-35; upbraids Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, Matt. 11: 20-30; sits at meat with a Pharisee, when his feet are anointed by a woman who had been a sinner, Luke 7: 36-50; makes with the Twelve a second circuit in Galilee, Luke 8: 1-3; heals a demoniac, at which the scribes and Pharisees blaspheme, Matt. 12: 22-37; Mark 3: 19-30; Luke 11: 14, 15, 17-23; refuses a sign to the scribes and Pharisees, and reproves them for their unbelief, Matt. 12: 38-45; Luke 11: 16, 24-26; is sought by his mother and brethren, Matt. 12: 46-50; Mark 3: 31-35; Luke 8: 19-21; dines with a Pharisee, Luke 11: 37; and reproves the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy, Luke 11: 38-54; warns his disciples and the multitude against the leaven of the Pharisees, Luke 12: 1-12; refuses to act as umpire in secular disputes, Luke 12: 13-15; pronounces the parable of the rich fool, Luke 12: 16-21; exhorts to reliance upon God, and to watchfulness, Luke 12: 22-53; reproves the people for their unbelief, Luke 12: 54-59; pronounces the parable of the barren fig tree, Luke 13: 6-9; and of the sower, Matt. 13: 1-23; Mark 4: 1-25; Luke 8: 4-18; and of the tares, Matt. 13: 24-30; and other parables, Matt. 13: 31-53; Mark 4: 26-34; crosses the lake and stills the tempest, Matt. 8: 18-27; Mark 4: 35-41; Luke 8: 22-25; 9: 57-61; heals the two demoniacs of Gadara, Matt. 8: 28-34; 9: 1; Mark 5: 1-21; Luke 8: 26-40; is entertained by Levi, Matt. 9: 10-17; Mark 2: 15-22; Luke 5: 29-39; raises Jairus' daughter and heals the woman with a bloody flux, Matt. 9: 18-26; Mark 5: 22-43; Luke 8: 41-56; heals two blind men and casts out a dumb spirit, Matt. 9: 27-34; is again rejected at Nazareth, Matt. 13: 54-58; Mark 6: 1-6; makes a third circuit in Galilee and commissions and sends forth the Twelve, Matt. 9: 35-38; 10: 1, 5-42; 11: 1; Mark 6: 6-13; Luke 9: 1-6; retires with the Twelve across the lake, and feeds five thousand, Matt. 14: 13-21; Mark 6: 30-44; Luke 9: 10-17; John 6: 1-14; walks upon the water, Matt. 14: 22-26; Mark 6: 45-56; John 6: 15-21; discourses with the multitude on the true bread of life, John 6: 22-71; 7: 1.

## V.

## FROM OUR LORD'S THIRD PASSOVER UNTIL HIS FINAL DEPARTURE FROM GALILEE AT THE FESTIVAL OF TABERNACLES.

TIME: *Six Months.*

Jesus justifies his disciples for eating with unwashed hands, Matt. 15: 1-20; Mark 7: 1-23; goes into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, where he heals the daughter of the Syrophenician woman, Matt. 15: 21-28; Mark 7: 24-30; returns to Decapolis and heals a deaf and dumb man, and feeds four thousand, Matt. 15: 29-38; Mark 7: 31-37; 8: 1-9; refuses a sign to the Pharisees and Sadducees, Matt. 15: 39; 16: 1-4; Mark 8: 10-12; cautions the disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees, Matt. 16: 4-12; Mark 8: 13-21; heals a blind man at Bethsaida, Mark 8: 22-26; departs to the region of Caesarea Philippi, and receives from Peter and the disciples the profession of their faith, Matt. 16: 13-20; Mark 8: 27-30; Luke 9: 18-21; foretells his own death and resurrection, Matt. 16: 21-28; Mark 8: 31-38; 9: 1; Luke 9: 22-27; is transfigured, Matt. 17: 1-13; Mark 9: 2-13; Luke 9: 28-36; heals a demoniac whom his disciples could not cure, Matt. 17: 14-21; Mark 9: 14-29; Luke 9: 37-43;

again foretells his own death and resurrection, Matt. 17: 22, 23; Mark 9: 30-32; Luke 9: 43-45; returns to Capernaum and miraculously provides tribute-money, Matt. 17: 24-27; Mark 9: 33; exhorts his disciples to humility and brotherly love, Matt. 18: 1-35; Mark 9: 33-50; Luke 9: 46-50; instructs and sends forth the Seventy, Luke 10: 1-16; takes his final departure from Galilee and goes up to the feast of tabernacles, John 7: 2-10; Luke 9: 51-56; passes through Samaria where he cleanses ten lepers, Luke 17: 11-19.

## VI.

FEAST OF TABERNACLES AND OUR LORD'S SUBSEQUENT ACTS UNTIL HIS ARRIVAL AT BETHANY, SIX DAYS BEFORE THE FOURTH PASSOVER.

TIME: *Six months wanting six days.*

Jesus attends the feast of tabernacles, and teaches publicly, John 7: 11-53; 8: 1; takes occasion from their charge against the woman taken in adultery, to rebuke the Pharisees, John 8: 2-11; reproveth in a further discourse the Jews, who in consequence attempt to stone him, John 8: 12-59; pronounces the parable of the good Samaritan, Luke 10: 25-37; visits Martha and Mary at Bethany, Luke 10: 38-42; teaches his disciples again how to pray, Luke 11: 1-13; receives the Seventy on their return and rejoices in their spiritual knowledge, Luke 10: 17-24; heals at Jerusalem on the sabbath a man who was born blind, at which the Pharisees are highly displeased, John 9: 1-41; 10: 1-21; is present in Jerusalem at the feast of dedication, after which he retires beyond Jordan, John 10: 22-42; raises Lazarus from the dead at Bethany, John 11: 1-46; again retires from Jerusalem in consequence of the murderous designs of the chief priests and Pharisees, John 11: 47-54; is followed by multitudes beyond Jordan, and heals an infirm woman on the sabbath, Matt. 19: 1, 2; Mark 10: 1; Luke 13: 10-21; teaches on his way to Jerusalem, Luke 13: 22-35; dines with a chief Pharisee on the sabbath, Luke 14: 1-24; shows what is required of true disciples, Luke 14: 25-35; pronounces the parables of the lost sheep, the prodigal son, the unjust steward, and the rich man and Lazarus, Luke 15: 1-32; 16: 1-31; inculcates forbearance and faith, Luke 17: 1-10; predicts the suddenness of his final coming, Luke 17: 20-37; pronounces the parables of the importunate widow, and the Pharisee and publican, Luke 18: 1-14; gives precepts respecting divorce, Matt. 19: 3-12; Mark 10: 2-12; receives and blesses little children, Matt. 19: 13-15; Mark 10: 13-16; Luke 18: 15-17; answers the inquiry of the rich young man, and pronounces the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, Matt. 19: 16-30; 20: 1-16; Mark 10: 17-31; Luke 18: 18-30; foretells a third time his death and resurrection, Matt. 20: 17-19; Mark 10: 32-34; Luke 18: 31-34; replies to the ambitious request of James and John, Matt. 20: 20-28; Mark 10: 35-45; heals two blind men near Jericho, Matt. 20: 29-34; Mark 10: 46-52; Luke 18: 35-43; 19: 1; visits Zaccheus and utters the parable of the ten pounds, Luke 19: 2-28; arrives at Bethany six days before the Passover, John 11: 55-57; 12: 1, 9-11.

## VII.

OUR LORD'S PUBLIC ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM, AND THE SUBSEQUENT TRANSACTIONS BEFORE THE FOURTH PASSOVER.

TIME: *Four days.*

Jesus makes his public entry into Jerusalem, Matt. 21: 1-11, 14-17; Mark 11: 1-11; Luke 19: 29-44; John 12: 12-19; curses the barren fig tree and cleanses a second time the temple, Matt. 21: 12, 13, 18, 19; Mark 11: 12-19; Luke 19: 45-48; his authority questioned by the chief priests, on which he pronounces the parable of the two sons, Matt. 21: 23-32; Mark 11: 27-33; Luke 20: 1-8; and of the wicked husbandmen, Matt. 21: 33-46; Mark 12: 1-12; Luke 20: 9-19; and of the marriage of the king's son, Matt. 22: 1-14; replies to the question of the lawfulness of giving tribute to Cæsar, Matt. 22: 15-22; Mark 12: 13-17; Luke 20: 20-26; teaches the Sadducees the doctrine of the resurrection, Matt. 22: 23-33; Mark 12: 18-27; Luke 20: 27-40; is questioned by a lawyer as to what is the great commandment of the law, Matt. 22: 34-40; Mark 12: 28, 34; proposes a question to the Pharisees respecting the relation of Christ to David, Matt. 22: 41-46; Mark 12: 35-37; Luke 20: 41-44; pronounces woes upon the Pharisees and laments over Jerusalem, Matt. 23: 1-39;

Mark 12: 38-40; Luke 20: 45-47; commends the widow who cast two mites into the treasury, Mark 12: 41-44; Luke 21: 1-4; foretells the destruction of the temple, Matt. 24: 1-42; Mark 13: 1-37; Luke 21: 5-36; exhorts to watchfulness in reference to his final coming, Matt. 24: 43-51; pronounces the parables of the ten virgins and five talents, Matt. 25: 1-30; describes the scenes of the last judgment, Matt. 25: 13-46; sups at Bethany, Matt. 26: 1-16; Mark 14: 1-9; Luke 22: 1, 2; John 12: 2-8; is betrayed by Judas Iscariot, Matt. 26: 14-16; Mark 14: 10, 11; Luke 21: 3-6; prepares to eat the passover, Matt. 26: 17-19; Mark 14: 12-16; Luke 22: 7-13.

## VIII.

## FOURTH PASSOVER; OUR LORD'S PASSION, AND THE ACCOMPANYING CIRCUMSTANCES UNTIL THE END OF THE JEWISH SABBATH.

TIME: *Two days.*

Jesus eats the passover with his disciples, Matt. 26: 20; Mark 14: 17; Luke 22: 14-18; washes their feet, John 13: 1-20; points out Judas as the traitor, Matt. 26: 21-35; Mark 14: 18-21; Luke 22: 21-23; John 13: 21-35; foretells Peter's fall, Matt. 26: 31-35; Mark 14: 27-31; Luke 22: 31-38; John 13: 36-38; institutes the Lord's Supper, Matt. 26: 26-29; Mark 14: 22-25; Luke 22: 19, 20; 1 Cor. 11: 23-25; comforts his disciples, John 14: 1-31; declares himself to be the true Vine, John 15: 1-27; promises the Comforter, John 16: 1-33; prays for his disciples and other believers, John 17: 1-26; goes forth to Gethsemane where he is in a dreadful agony, Matt. 26: 30, 36-46; Mark 14: 26: 32-42; Luke 22: 39-46; John 18: 1; is betrayed and made prisoner, Matt. 26: 47-56; Mark 14: 43-52; Luke 22: 47-53; John 18: 2-12; is brought before Caiaphas and denied by Peter, Matt. 26: 57, 58, 69-75; Mark 14: 53, 54, 66-72; Luke 22: 54-62; John 18: 13-18, 25-27; is brought before the Sanhedrim and condemned and mocked, Matt. 26: 59-68; Mark 14: 55-65; Luke 22: 63-71; John 18: 19-24; is led away to Pilate, Matt. 27: 1, 2, 11-14; Mark 15: 1-5; Luke 23: 1-5; John 18: 28-38; is sent to Herod, Luke 23: 6-12; is delivered by Pilate to be crucified, Matt. 27: 26-30; Mark 15: 15-19; John 19: 1-3; is led away to Calvary, Matt. 27: 31-34; Mark 15: 20-23; Luke 23: 26-33; John 19: 16, 17; is crucified, Matt. 27: 35-38; Mark 15: 24-28; Luke 23: 33-38; John 19: 18-24; is mocked on the cross, Matt. 27: 39-44; Mark 15: 29-32; Luke 23: 35-43; expires on the cross, Matt. 27: 45-50; Mark 15: 33-37; Luke 23: 44-46; is taken down from the cross and buried, Matt. 27: 57-61; Mark 15: 42-47; Luke 23: 50-56; John 19: 31-42.

## IX.

## OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION, SUBSEQUENT APPEARANCES AND ASCENSION.

TIME: *Forty days.*

The women visit the sepulchre, Matt. 28: 1; Mark 16: 2-4; Luke 24: 1-3; John 20: 1, 2; vision of angels in the sepulchre, Matt. 28: 5-7; Mark 16: 5-7; Luke 24: 4-8; Jesus meets the women on their way back to the city, Matt. 28: 8-10; Mark 16: 8; Peter and John run to the sepulchre, Luke 24: 12; John 20: 3-10; Jesus shows himself to Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, Mark 16: 9-11; John 20: 11-18; the report of the watch, Matt. 28: 11-15; Jesus is seen by Peter, 1 Cor. 15: 5; and by the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, Mark 16: 12, 13; Luke 24: 13-35; shows himself the same evening to the disciples, Thomas being absent, Mark 16: 14-18; Luke 24: 36-40; John 20: 19-23; 1 Cor. 15: 5; and again one week after, Thomas being present, John 20: 24-29; shows himself to seven of them at the Sea of Tiberias, John 21: 1-24; meets above 500 brethren on a mountain in Galilee, Matt. 28: 16, 20; 1 Cor. 15: 6; is seen of James, and then of all the apostles, 1 Cor. 15: 7; Acts 1: 3-8; ascends to heaven, Mark 16: 19, 20; Luke 24: 50-53; Acts 1: 9-12.



## PREFACE TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

---

MATTHEW, called also Levi, the son of Alpheus (Mark 2: 14; Luke 3: 57, 29), was a publican or toll-gatherer under the Romans. He was a Galilean, but of what city or tribe of Israel it is unknown. He was first called by Jesus, while he abode in Capernaum (Matt. 9: 9). It is not probable, however, that he followed Jesus continuously, until he had settled his accounts with those by whom he had been employed (see N. on Matt. 9: 9). The field of his labors, after the apostles went abroad to preach to the Gentiles, is quite uncertain. Later writers say that he went to Ethiopia, where he is supposed to have died a martyr's death. This, however, is denied by Heracleon, as cited by Clement of Alexandria.

Various dates are assigned to the publication of Matthew's Gospel. It was beyond all question the first of the four Synoptic Gospels, and written probably some 30 years after the death of Christ. As it regards the language in which it was written, there has been much dispute. It is the almost unanimous testimony of the early Fathers, that it was originally composed in the Hebrew language, as spoken then by the inhabitants of Palestine. There is no question that it was written for the Hebrew Christians in Palestine, but this does not preclude its composition in Greek, since that was the prevalent language throughout the East, at the time when his gospel was probably written. The early Fathers might well and naturally imagine that, inasmuch as it was written for the Hebrew Christians, it was written in Hebrew. But it is a remarkable fact that no citations have been made from this supposed Hebrew gospel, nor was it used by those very Fathers on whose testimony it is supposed to have existed. The internal evidence in favor of a Greek original is so strong, that the best modern critics regard it as an incontrovertible fact that the gospel was written in that language by Matthew himself. Olshausen, in

.

order to harmonize these two conflicting views, conjectures that Matthew, previously to the publication of his Greek gospel, had written a gospel in Hebrew for the churches in Palestine.

Matthew rehearses more fully than the other Evangelists the acts of Jesus, and also some of his discourses, as the Sermon on the Mount, and the parables and discourses relating to his coming to destroy Jerusalem and to judge the world. He groups incidents together with little or no regard to their chronological order. His style is simple and perspicuous. His eye is ever on the fulfilment in Christ of ancient prophecies. He dwells on the circumstances of the birth of Jesus, and the progressive establishment of the Messianic kingdom. He has not the graphic power of Mark, or the spiritual perceptions of John, but in the clearness, simplicity and fulness of details, he is perhaps superior to either, and equal to Luke, whose gospel may be regarded as complementary to Matthew's, the one being adapted particularly to the Jewish, the other to the Gentile mind.

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW.

## CHAPTER I.

THE book of the <sup>a</sup> generation of Jesus Christ, <sup>b</sup> the son of David, <sup>c</sup> the son of Abraham.

2 <sup>d</sup> Abraham begat Isaac; and <sup>e</sup> Isaac begat Jacob; and <sup>f</sup> Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;

<sup>a</sup> Lu. 3: 23. <sup>b</sup> Ps. 132: 11; Is. 11: 1; Je. 23: 5. ch. 22: 42; John 7: 42; Ac. 2: 30; & 13: 23; Ro. 1: 3. <sup>c</sup> Ge. 12: 3, & 22: 18. Ga. 3: 16. <sup>d</sup> Ge. 21: 2, 3. <sup>e</sup> Ge. 25: 26. <sup>f</sup> Ge. 29: 35.

## CHAPTER I.

1. This verse announces the subject of vs. 2-17, after which the Evangelist proceeds to speak more directly of the birth of Jesus Christ. *The book*, i. e. table, record. *Generation* has here the sense of *genealogy*, and in connexion with *book* may be interpreted the *genealogical record*, or *family register*. *Jesus Christ*, the proper name of our Savior, given to him by divine appointment (v. 21). *Jesus*, derived from a Heb. word, signifying *Jehovah his help*, or *salvation*, denotes a savior, one who will save, and is the name of three persons in the New Testament, JESUS, the Savior of men; *Joshua* (called *Jesus* in Heb. 4: 8); and *Jesus*, surnamed *Justus*, a fellow-laborer of Paul (Col. 4: 11). The word *Christ*, Heb. *Messiah*, which signifies *the anointed*, a name given to the Hebrew kings, from their being anointed to the royal office (1 Sam. 16: 6; 24: 6, 10; 26: 9, 16; 2 Sam. 1: 14; 19: 21; Lam. 4: 20), and also to the high priests, who were also anointed, is by way of eminence applied to our Savior, the anointed of the Lord (Ps. 2: 2). From having been an appellation of his kingly and priestly office, it became a proper name, sometimes used by itself, and sometimes in the connexion, *Jesus Christ*. It is never affixed to *Jesus* in the Gospels, but only in their prefaces. In the Acts and Epistles, the combination *Jesus*

3 And <sup>g</sup> Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and <sup>h</sup> Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;

4 And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon;

<sup>g</sup> Ge. 38: 27. <sup>h</sup> Ru. 4: 18, &c. 1 Ch. 2, 5, 9, &c.

*Christ* is often found. The other appellations of our Lord, as Son of God, Son of man, &c. will be explained in the connexions in which they stand. *The son of David, the son of Abraham*, i. e. *the son of David and of Abraham*, for the word *son*, in both cases, refers to Jesus Christ. The proof of this is contained in the genealogical record which follows. Christ, according to prophecy, was to descend from David and Abraham. In proving his Messiahship, it became necessary, therefore, to trace back his origin, in an unbroken line, to these ancestors. Matthew followed the male line, because his gospel was primarily written for the Jews, and such a lineage only with them was legal. Luke, on the other hand, who wrote his gospel for the Gentiles, traced our Savior's pedigree upward from Heli, the father of Mary. This catalogue of names in Matthew is intended to furnish legal proof of the assertion, that Jesus Christ was "the son of David, the son of Abraham."

As it respects this genealogical table, three series of *fourteen* are adopted as a kind of technical mode of reckoning for the sake of convenience, by way of reference, and to assist the memory. These are made from Abraham to David; and from David to Josiah, or the epoch of the Babylonish captivity; and from Jechonias to Jesus, including the extremes, with the exception that Jecho-

5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;

6 And <sup>i</sup>Jesse begat David the king; and <sup>k</sup>David the king begat Solomon of her *that had been the wife* of Urias;

7 And <sup>l</sup>Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa;

8 And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias;

9 And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias;

10 And <sup>m</sup>Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias;

11 And <sup>n</sup>Josias begat Jeconias and his brethren, about the

<sup>i</sup>1 Sa. 16: 1, & 17: 12. <sup>k</sup>2 Sa. 12: 24. <sup>l</sup>1 Ch. 3: 10, &c. <sup>m</sup>2 Ki. 20: 21; 1 Ch. 3: 13. <sup>n</sup>Some read, *Josias begat Jakim, and Jakim begat Jeconias.* <sup>n</sup>See 1 Ch. 3: 15, 16.

nias, who was coeval with the epoch of the Babylonish captivity, is not reckoned before it, although he commences the third period. Naasson was cotemporary with Moses, and from him to David was about 492 years. Including the extremes, there were six generations, which gives 82 years for each. This is evidently too large, and we must conclude that some links are omitted in the enumeration. In like manner, between Phares and Aminadab, reckoning, as usual, the extremes, are *four* generations, which comprise the space of 240 years, giving 60 years to each, which is manifestly too large a space of time. At least one-half, if not two-thirds, of the links are passed over, but this does not invalidate the evidence of the record. In the second series, we find omitted the names of three kings, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, not for the reason, as some think, of their connexion, through Athaliah, with the idolatrous house of Ahab, but in order

time they were <sup>o</sup>carried away to Babylon:

12 And after they were brought to Babylon, <sup>p</sup>Jeconias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat <sup>q</sup>Zorobabel;

13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor;

14 And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud;

15 And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob;

16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations; and from David un-

<sup>o</sup>2 Ki. 24: 14, 15, 16, & 25, 11; 2 Ch. 36: 10, 20; Je. 27: 20, & 39: 9, & 52; 11, 15, 23, 29, 30; Da. 1: 2. <sup>p</sup>1 Ch. 3: 17, 19. <sup>q</sup>Ezra. 3: 2, & 5: 2; Ne. 12: 1; Hag. 1: 1.

to reduce each series to the number *fourteen*, or twice that of the sacred number *seven*.

6. *Of her that had been the wife of Urias*, literally, *of her* (who was) *Urias's*. So we speak of *Luther's Catherine*, *Standish's Rose*, &c. by the same possessive construction.

11. *About the time*, &c. Reference is had not to any one captivity, but to all that took place in the time of Nebuchadnezzar. The greater or principal captivities took place in the first, eighth, and nineteenth years; the minor captivities, in the seventh, eighteenth, and twenty-third years of his reign.

17. *Generations*. This word here denotes the single descent between father and son. It was reckoned by the ancient Hebrews at 100 years (Gen. 15: 13, 16; Ex. 12: 40), but afterwards at 30 or 40 years, or three generations for each hundred years (Deut. 1: 35; 2: 14). Sometimes, as in Luke 1: 50;

til the carrying away into Babylon *are* fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ *are* fourteen generations.

18 ¶ Now the <sup>r</sup> birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child <sup>s</sup> of the Holy Ghost.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not willing

<sup>r</sup> Lu. 1: 27.    <sup>s</sup> Lu. 1: 35.

Acts 14: 16, the word generation is used for a period, or age; and sometimes, as in Matt. 11: 16; 12: 39, 41; 17: 17, for the men of an age or period of time.

18. *The birth*, i. e. the circumstances of the birth or nativity. Such condensed expressions are common in every language. *On this wise*. In the following manner. *Was espoused*. Between the time of betrothal and marriage celebration, was commonly an interval of ten or twelve months (Deut. 20: 7). During this period they were spoken of as man and wife, although there was no intercourse between them, not even an interchange of conversation. Any violation of the vow of fidelity was punished, as though the marriage relation had been consummated; and if the bridegroom was unwilling to fulfil his engagement, he had to be absolved from his promise, by giving a bill of divorce, as though to his wife. *Came together*, in the full marriage relation of man and wife. *She was found*, i. e. was discovered to be. *Of the Holy Ghost*, i. e. through the agency of the Holy Ghost. This was the true state of the case, but not known to Joseph or her friends. She had kept the vision of the angel (Luke 1: 26) to herself.

19. *Husband*. See N. on the preceding verse. *Just man*. One who was disposed to do what was right and proper. Some take *just* here in the

'to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: "for that which is † conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21 <sup>r</sup> And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name

<sup>t</sup> De. 24: 1.    <sup>u</sup> Lu. 1: 35.    † Gr. *begotten*.  
<sup>e</sup> Lu. 1: 31.

sense of *kind*, *benignant* (see John, 17: 25; 1 John 1: 9). The two ideas of the word may here be combined. *To make her a public example*, by repudiating her publicly, or by giving her up to the punishment inflicted upon such as broke the marriage vow (Levit. 20: 10; John 8: 5). *Was minded*, i. e. intended, purposed. Mere inclination is not here meant. *To put her away privily*. Provision for this form of divorce was made in Deut. 24: 1.

20. *But while he thought on these things*, i. e. was reflecting in his mind what course to pursue. *Behold*. This interjectional word serves to call attention more particularly to what follows, especially if, as here, it is something wonderful. *The angel*; literally, a *messenger*, but here, as is in similar connexions, an *angel*, one of the messengers of Jehovah, employed on errands and agencies connected with the affairs of men. These celestial messengers are represented in the Bible as great, glorious, happy, and innumerable, standing in God's presence, and swift to do His will. In the trial of their obedience, some of the angels fell from their first estate (2 Pet. 2: 4; Jude 6), and are now the subtle, malignant foes of God, and all good beings, striving to destroy or impair the happiness of all over whom they are permitted to have any influence. *In a dream*. A very common mode, in ancient times, of communica-



JESUS: for <sup>y</sup> he shall save his people from their sins.

22. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

*y* Ac. 4: 12, & 5: 31, & 13: 23, 38.

tion from God to man. See Gen. 20: 3; 28: 12; 31: 11, 24; Num. 12: 6; 1 Kings 3: 5. *Joseph son of David.* A most honorable appellation, and of Messianic import, since Christ was to spring from this most illustrious of Jewish kings. *Fear not.* Do not doubt or hesitate. *To take unto thee,* in the full marriage relation. *Thy wife,* i. e. thy espoused wife. See N. on v. 18. *Is of the Holy Ghost,* i. e. of divine procreative influence. Being thus formed by the power of God, he became the Son of God, free from that corrupt and sinful nature, which all possess who are descended from Adam by ordinary generation. He was thus prepared to be a Lamb without spot or blemish, a fit offering for the sins of man, and accepted of God, as a substitute for those whom he came to redeem.

21. *Jesus.* The reason why he was thus called is given in the next clause, *for he shall save his people from their sins.* By this latter term is meant the dominion of sin over the soul, and its penalty, from both of which Christ, as the Redeemer of man, saves all who believe in him. *His people.* God's chosen people, the Jews; but in its highest sense, his spiritual children, chosen out of every people or nation where the gospel has been preached. Rom. 9: 25; 2 Cor. 6: 16.

22. *All this was done,* i. e. all these circumstances of Christ's conception and birth took place. *That it might be fulfilled.* We are not to suppose from this, that the event here spoken of took place merely or principally to fulfil this prophecy. Joseph did not remain in Egypt (2: 15), in order to secure the fulfillment of the prophecy there referred to. Nor did Jesus dwell in Capernaum (4: 14), for the purpose of accomplish-

23. <sup>z</sup> Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and  $\parallel$  they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

24. Then Joseph being raised

*z* Is. 7: 14.  $\parallel$  Or *his name shall be called.*

ing the prediction of Isaiah. There was, however, a moral necessity that all the predictions respecting Jesus Christ should be fulfilled. What God declares shall take place, must of necessity have a fulfillment. See Luke 22: 37. There is in this sense, then, no objection to the usual interpretation (*in order that*), which Alford most strenuously maintains. But it answers equally well to the original Greek, to render the words, *So there was a fulfillment,* i. e. in the birth of Christ, the Scripture referred to in Isaiah had a fulfillment. There was an agreement between the event, and the prophetic declaration of the Scripture respecting it. *Of the Lord by the prophet.* See 2 Pet. 1: 21. "No Scripture proceeds from a private (i. e. human) interpretation of the divine will, for prophecy came not of old by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

23. *Behold a virgin,* &c. The prophecy here referred to is in Isa. 7: 14. A reference to the chapter in which it is found, will show that typical names were given to children, in token of deliverance from the kings of Israel and Syria. These names are evidently symbolical of the greater deliverance from sin effected by our Savior. The whole circumstances of their birth, their symbolic names, and the pledged deliverance, stood forth as prophetic of the more marvellous birth, the name in its highest and most literal import, and the salvation greater than any or all temporal deliverances, which should be realized in the birth of the true Emmanuel, the Savior of the world. The prediction lies in the event referred to in Isaiah, with its attending circumstances, and not simply in the words.

from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife :

25. And knew her not till she had brought forth <sup>a</sup> her first born son : and he called his name JESUS.

<sup>a</sup> Ex. 13 : 2 ; Lu. 2 : 7, 21.

So in 2 : 15, "Out of Egypt have I called my Son," the redemption of Israel from Egyptian bondage is typical of the calling of God's Son from the same region, whither he had been carried to escape the wrath of Herod. In like manner, the passover was symbolical of "Christ our passover." God can as easily and clearly predict or symbolize a future event, by some wondrous transaction in the history of his people, as in direct language. No one should stumble at this symbolical or typical mode of prophecy, especially when God declares that in certain events such prophetic symbols find their fulfillment. *They shall call.* The subject of the verb is left indefinite in the original: *men shall call.* Such shall be his universal appellation. The prophecy was fulfilled, not from his having simply been named Emmanuel, but because he was really *God with us.* In the original prophecy it is, "thou shalt call," but is here changed to suit its greater and final fulfillment. The symbolic name *Emmanuel*, was first given to the child referred to in Isa. 7 : 14 ; 8 : 10, and is here, and in a higher and more appropriate sense, given to Jesus, the Son of God and Savior of the world. The word being Hebrew, the Evangelist gives its interpretation, a very clear evidence that the gospel was not written in that language, unless it was interpolated by some translator, which is not at all probable. The Hebrews often gave names to their children, indicative of some event, or compounded in some way from the name of God.

24. *Being raised from sleep.* Having fully awoke. *Did as the angel of the Lord,* &c. The marriage, probably, was consummated immediately,

## CHAPTER II.

NOW when <sup>a</sup> Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men <sup>b</sup> from the east to Jerusalem,

<sup>a</sup> Lu. 2 : 4, 6, 7.    <sup>b</sup> Ge. 10 : 30, & 25 : 6 ; 1 Ki. 4 : 30.

or very soon after the dream. The word translated *then*, is not here a particle of time, but the simple connective *and, so.*

25. *And knew her not till,* &c. The virginity of Mary before the birth of Jesus is directly asserted. But the limitation of time to that event, together with the expression *first born son*, while it furnishes no positive proof that she had children afterwards, strongly implies that such was the fact. This is rendered still more probable by what is stated in 13 : 55. *He called.* The verb has no expressed subject in the original, but v. 21 shows that it must be referred to Joseph.

## CHAPTER II.

1-12. The reader, who would follow in chronological order the events in the life of Jesus, should turn to Luke 2 : 1-38, and read the incidents of his birth, the appearance of the angels to the shepherds, the circumcision of Jesus, and his presentation in the Temple. Then follows THE VISIT OF THE MAGI at Bethlehem, as here related by Matthew.

1. *Bethlehem.* A city of Judah, situated about six miles S. by W. of Jerusalem, and celebrated as the birth-place of David, whence its appellation, "city of David," Luke 2 : 4. It was called sometimes Bethlehem-Judah, to distinguish it from another Bethlehem in Zebulun (Josh. 19 : 15 ; Judges 12 : 10), and sometimes Ephrath (Gen. 35 : 19 ; Micah 5 : 2). The names Bethlehem, *house of bread*, and Ephrath, *fruitful*, were doubtless given it from the fertility of the surrounding country. Its present population is computed at from two to three thousand. *Judea*, properly the territory which, in the division

2. Saying, <sup>c</sup> Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen <sup>d</sup> his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

<sup>c</sup> Lu. 2: 11. <sup>d</sup> Nu. 24: 17; Is. 60: 3.

of the land, fell to the tribe of Judah. In the time of our Savior it was employed in a more extensive sense, to include the whole southern portion of Palestine W. of the Jordan. *In the days* (i. e. during the reign) of Herod the king. This was Herod surnamed the Great, to distinguish him from three others of the same name, who subsequently reigned in whole, or part, over the Jewish nation. He rebuilt and adorned the temple, devised and perfected many public works, and raised Jerusalem to a high pitch of magnificence, but was cruel, jealous and tyrannical. He died at the age of 70, about four years before the beginning of our era, which was fixed in the sixth century, and erroneously made between four and five years too late. *Wise men from the east* (i. e. living in the east). These were Magi, a name given by the Medes, Persians, and Babylonians, to their priests and wise men. They were learned in astrology and magic, and exercised great authority over the princes, nobles, and common people. The word itself signifies *great, powerful*. In some respects, they corresponded to the Levites of the Israelitish nation. The word *East*, as denoting locality, is used in the Bible in general of any country east of Judea. These Magi were probably Persians or Arabians. *Jerusalem*, the capital of the Jewish nation, celebrated for its temple, its beauty and strength of situation, its memorable siege and destruction by Nebuchadnezzar, and afterwards by Titus, and especially as being the place where our blessed Lord was condemned and crucified. It was originally called Salem (Gen. 14 : 8), and afterwards Jebus (Josh. 18 : 28), of which names Jerusalem is compounded. As it was the capital of God's ancient visible church, it is often taken in the figurative sense of the church, the Redeemer's

3 When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4 And when he had gathered

kingdom, the heavenly Jerusalem (Gal. 4 : 26; Heb. 12 : 22; Rev. 3 : 12; 21 : 2, 10).

2. *Where is he, &c.* The inquiry naturally arises, how the Magi knew that a child was born in Judea, who was to be king of the Jews. They could not have learned it from magic or astrology. There was indeed a general impression at that time throughout the civilized world, that a remarkable personage was soon to appear, who should bring back the golden age, and restore men to their primitive purity and happiness. But this general notion was too vague to account for the definite knowledge possessed by these Magi, as to the time and place of the birth of this expected person, and especially the relation which he was to sustain to the Jews as their king. It is no adequate reason for this remarkable journey and its attendant circumstances, that Balaam, many hundred years previously, had predicted that a Star should come out of Jacob, and a Sceptre rise out of Israel (Num. 24 : 17); or that Daniel predicted the seventy heptades of years before the coming of Messiah (Dan. 9 : 24-26). These predictions might account for the general impression that a distinguished person was about to appear, but not for the definite knowledge implied in the question, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" They must have acted under a divine impulse in taking so long a journey, and for so definite an object. He who inspired Balaam to utter so remarkable a prediction respecting the Messiah, could easily incite these Magi to go and do homage to that same Messiah at his appearance. *Born King of the Jews.* Not obtaining regal power by conquest or political craft, but appointed to his sovereignty by God, being king from his very birth. The term Jews in the New Testament,



all ' the chief priests and scribes of the people together, ' he de-  
e2 Ch. 36:14. f2 Ch. 34:13. g Mal. 2:7.

is applied to all the inhabitants of Palestine, although properly belonging to those only of the country of Juda. *For we have seen.* This sentence stands as the reason why they make the inquiry: He must be born, *for* we have seen, &c. The better order of the words would be: *we in the East* (i. e. dwelling in the East), *have seen his star.* We have no means of knowing whether this was a comet, meteor, or some other luminous appearance. It was evidently a divinely appointed sign to guide them to the place where Jesus lay, and well adapted to arrest their attention as astrologers. They call the star *his*, not so much from the general notion of astrology, that every person is born under some planet which controls his destiny, as from its office work of guiding them westward to the place of the child's birth.

From nice astronomical calculations, some have maintained, that a conjunction took place that year, the 20th of May, between Saturn and Jupiter, and another, on the 27th of October, between the same planets, which caused them to appear as one star of great brightness. The time between these conjunctions, or about five months, would suffice for their journey from Chakdea to Jerusalem, including the time necessary to make preparations for it. Thus the two appearances of the star are accounted for. On their route from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, these planets in this conjunction, would be in the direction of Bethlehem. In respect to this astronomical calculation, it may be remarked that while no miraculous interposition need be supposed, when a satisfactory explanation may be obtained from natural causes, yet on the face of this narration, there is evidently something supernatural in the appearance of the star, which directed these Magi to Jerusalem, and especially to Bethlehem, with such precision as to enable them to find, without any inquiry, so far as we know,

manded of them where Christ should be born.

5 And they said unto him, In

the very house in which was the infant Savior. *To worship him.* Not religious worship, but the homage rendered to a superior, usually accompanied with kneeling or prostration. See v. 11; Mark 15:19.

3. *He was troubled.* Although seventy years of age, and having therefore no cause of personal fear from one, who was yet an infant, yet such was his jealousy and apprehension of evil, either to himself or his children, that he was thrown by this inquiry of the Magi into a state of extreme trepidation. Perhaps he feared that the common people, if it were noised abroad that a child of so remarkable a character was born at Bethlehem, would become so excited as to endeavor to subvert his authority, even while their Messiah was yet a child. He dreaded more the natural turbulence of the Jews, than any immediate danger from the child itself. *Jerusalem*, i. e. its inhabitants. If this refers to Herod's courtiers, as some think, there would be the same cause of alarm to them as to him. But if, as is more likely, reference is had to the citizens in general, their alarm must be attributed to their fear of the renewal of Herod's cruelties, the effect of which they had so often experienced.

4. *Chief priests and scribes.* These persons composed the Sanhedrim, or supreme council of the Jews. It consisted of seventy members, of which the high priest was president, and grew out of the institution of the council of seventy elders, appointed by Moses (Num. 11:16). In the term *chief priests*, are included, besides the high priest, and those of his immediate connexion, the heads of the twenty-four classes of priests (1 Chron. 24:1-19). With these were joined the most learned and influential of the scribes, who were the transcribers of the Jewish law, and decided cases which grew out of its doubtful application. This class are often referred to in connexion with the

Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

6 <sup>h</sup> And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor,

*h* Mi. 5:2; John 7:42.

elders and chief priests. They had become so wicked and hypocritical, that our Savior denounced upon them the severest woes and judgments. *He demanded*; more literally, *he made inquiry*. Where Christ should be born, i. e. the predicted birth-place of the Messiah. This question shows how very imperfect was his knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures. Any member of the grand council could have answered his inquiry, and yet from his gross ignorance of the Scriptures, he regarded the question so difficult, that he referred it to the whole Sanhedrim. His is not the only example, however, of a ruler, able and politic in holding the reins of government, and yet totally ignorant of God's word and requirements.

5. *In Bethlehem of Judea*. Some think that these words comprise the reply of the Sanhedrim, and that the citation from Micah which follows, is made by the Evangelist. It is better, however, to regard the quotation as made by the Sanhedrim, in proof of what they had told Herod, in respect to the birth-place of the expected Messiah.

6. *And thou Bethlehem, &c.* This prophecy found in Micah 5:2, is probably quoted from the Septuagint, and varies slightly in language, though not in sense, from the original. The sense of the original prophecy is this: Thou Bethlehem Ephrathah, though now small of influence, yet by being the birth-place of the Messiah, shalt be highly honored. The sense of the quotation in Matthew, is that Bethlehem by this event would be reckoned among the first of the cities of Juda. There is no essential difference between the two. The word in Micah translated, *thousands*, means also *leaders, princes*,

that shall || rule my people Israel.

7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Bethle-

*i* Re. 2:27. || Or, *feed*.

which accounts for this term in Matthew. *In the land of Judah*; literally, *land of Judah*, an appositional clause denoting a district or canton of Judah. This is expressed in v. 16, by the words "Bethlehem and all its coasts." *Art not the least* is put, by a common figure of speech, for *art among the greatest*. *Shall rule*; literally, *shall feed* as a shepherd his flock. Kings and princes in ancient times were often referred to in the character of shepherds of their people. In a higher sense, God is styled the Shepherd of Israel (Ps. 80:1). *Israel*, i. e. Israelites. After the captivity, those who remained of the tribes were generally denominated Jews.

7. *Then*. A different word from that in 1:24 (on which see note), signifying here sequency of time. Herod's inquiry of the wise men, as to the time of the appearance of the star, followed immediately upon the dismissal of the Sanhedrim. He lost no time in his efforts to remove the cause of his alarm. His cruel project to destroy the male infants of Bethlehem, was formed doubtless at once, and he planned the surest and most speedy method of its accomplishment. In all this we see the suspicious, cruel, and revengeful tyrant. *Diligently*. Accurately, with particularity. *What time the star appeared*; literally, *the time of the star appearing*, which may refer to the time of its beginning, or its length of continuance. Most likely the former, as the time when it first appeared, would indicate pretty clearly the time of the child's birth, which Herod's plan of destroying the children made it desirable for him to know.

8. *And he sent, &c.* The information received from the Sanhedrim enabled Herod to reply to the inquiry of the Magi, as to the place of the birth of

hem, and said, Go, and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

the child, whose star they had seen. In addition, he expresses a strong sympathy with them in the object of their visit, in order thus to gain more definite information respecting the object of his dread. *Go and search diligently*; literally, *going search diligently*, the fulness of expression, indicating haste suited to the pretended desire of Herod to honor the child. *Bring me word, &c.* As the Magi may be supposed to have had but little knowledge of Herod's duplicity and cruelty, his course was eminently adapted to deceive them, as to his real design in this apparent zeal to do homage to an infant child.

9. *Had heard the king*, i. e. received the king's command. *In the east*, i. e. in their own country. Some render: *in its rising*, a sense not admitted by the original. The star or meteor which they saw in their own land had disappeared. But now to their great joy it reappeared, and conducted them to the object of their search. It was so low that having become stationary, the place over which it stood was clearly designated. *Went before them* to guide them in their way. *Stood over where*, &c. Not over the whole town of Bethlehem, as some absurdly suppose, but over the house where the child was. The guidance of the star would have been superfluous in any other view, since Herod's direction was clear and specific, as to the town which they were to visit.

10. *They rejoiced*, &c. One of the most highly intensive forms of expression in the Bible, showing how deeply interested were these wise men, in

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, <sup>k</sup> they || presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

<sup>k</sup> Ps. 72:10; Is. 60:6. || Or, *offered*.

finding the child whose birth had been indicated to them by the star. It was not an idle curiosity which had drawn them from their Eastern home. They were acting evidently under a strong impulse, to which the mere desire of doing homage to external pomp or power, could not have given birth.

11. *And when they were come*; more literally, *and having come*. This throws the principal emphasis upon the verb *saw* which follows. *The house*, where the parents of Jesus were at that time tarrying. *With Mary his mother*. Joseph is not here mentioned, as some think, because he happened at this moment to be absent, but more probably because he was only the reputed father of the child. *Fell down and worshipped him*. They prostrated themselves according to the oriental custom. As far as the narrative goes, they seem to have paid no attention to Mary, but were wholly engrossed with the child. This was far unlike the deification with which she is now regarded by the Romanists. It is worthy of note, that the lowly condition of the parents of Jesus did not raise a doubt in the minds of the Magi, of the worthiness of the child to receive their homage and presents. *Treasures*. Boxes or caskets, the thing contained by a common figure of speech for that which contains it. *Frankincense*. A transparent and fragrant gum, used by the ancients as incense in religious worship. *Myrrh*. A bitter aromatic gum used also by the ancients for incense and perfume.

12. *Being warned of God*; literally, *having being warned*, &c. The words

12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

13 ¶ And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother,

1 Ch. 1: 20.

*of God* are not in the original, although evidently implied in the words, *warned in a dream*. The protecting care thus manifested for these Magi, confirms the belief that their visit was divinely suggested, and undertaken from higher views than the rendering of earthly homage to the newborn child. It does not, however, follow from this, that they had any notion of the spiritual nature of that kingdom, which "He who was born King of the Jews," was to set up, above what was entertained by pious Jews, whose opinions on the nature of the Messianic reign we know to have been very erroneous. All we mean to affirm is, that in this remarkable visit they were acting from a higher impulse than a mere gratification of astrologic curiosity. In this warning dream, God not only preserved them from Herod, whose suspicious and cruel temper would hardly have permitted them to return in safety to their country, after doing homage to one whom they styled King of the Jews, but gave time, through the delay of Herod's bloody designs, for Joseph to escape with the child and its mother to Egypt. *Should not return*; literally, *bend back their course*.

#### 13-23. THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT. HEROD'S MASSACRE OF THE CHILDREN.

13. Joseph as the head of the family, is divinely directed to take precautionary measures against Herod's cruelty, yet the sacred narration has regard continually to the fact, that he was not the father of the child. *Arise, and take the young child*. He probably left Bethlehem that very night. *Flee into Egypt*.

and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

Egypt was out of Herod's jurisdiction, and was only three or four days' journey from Bethlehem. It was a convenient place of refuge from the fact, also, that many Jews dwelt there.

14. *When he arose*. The literal rendering, *having arisen*, would have been better, as conveying more clearly the idea, that the act of rising followed immediately upon the awaking from his dream. *By night*. In this way, he showed his ready obedience to the divine direction, and also concealed his departure from his neighbors.

15. *Until the death of Herod*. This event took place about one year after the flight to Egypt. The visit of the Magi must be placed after the presentation in the temple (Luke 2: 22), for upon their departure, the child was taken immediately to Egypt. After the presentation, the family returned to Bethlehem, and there abode several weeks. Probably the child was at least three months old before the visit of the Magi. It would take nearly or quite this time for them, after having seen the star, to make preparations for their journey and perform it, at the rate of travel in that age and country. There is no necessity, from what is said in v. 16, of making Jesus, as do some commentators, to be at least one year old when taken to Egypt. Herod was careful to extend the slaughter of the infants to a point of age, high enough to preclude every chance of escape from the one he wished to destroy. *That it might be fulfilled, &c.* See N. on 1: 22. The prophecy is found in Hosea 11: 1, and its fulfill-



<sup>m</sup> Out of Egypt have I called my son.

16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof,

*m Ho. 11 : 1.*

ment consisted in the similarity of this event to that spoken of by the prophet. Israel, designated often as God's son, was called from a state of exile and bondage in Egypt. Jesus, the Son of God, was also an exile in that same land, from which he too was recalled. Of these two similar events, the latter is an evident fulfillment of that which was typified or symbolized by the other. Commentators have not failed to notice the remarkable providence of God, by which the only region out of Palestine ever visited by our Savior, should be that in which the chosen people of God suffered such affliction, and from which they were brought out with such an amazing display of divine power.

16. Herod probably waited several days for the return of the Magi. This gave ample time for the escape of Joseph and his family. *Was mocked*, i. e. was trifled with, deceived. *Was exceeding wroth*. His naturally cruel and revengeful temper was excited to the highest pitch by the disregard with which his command had been treated by the Magi. *Sent forth* a body of soldiers. *All the children*, i. e. the male children. *In all the coasts thereof*, i. e. the country adjacent to Bethlehem, and belonging to it as the chief town. *From two years old and under*. Herod's cruel policy included all the children under two years of age, in order that there might be no chance of escape for the child he wished to destroy. *According to the time*. General conformity is here intended, inasmuch as the slaughter embraced many who were born some time before the appearance of the star. It is objected to this narra-

tion that Josephus makes no mention of this slaughter. But this omission is not strange, when we reflect upon the bloody character of Herod, which rendered it possible to relate only a portion of his cruel deeds, since otherwise an extended history like that of Josephus would have been too prolix and circumstantial. The number of infants, although large enough to excite horror at the time of their slaughter, yet was small when compared with the hundreds and even thousands who were the victims of Herod's savage cruelty, at other times during his tyrannical reign. It is no objection therefore to the credibility of this account, that no allusion is made to it by Josephus.

17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by <sup>n</sup>Jeremy the prophet, saying,

18 In Ramah was there a voice

*n Je. 31 : 15.*

tion that Josephus makes no mention of this slaughter. But this omission is not strange, when we reflect upon the bloody character of Herod, which rendered it possible to relate only a portion of his cruel deeds, since otherwise an extended history like that of Josephus would have been too prolix and circumstantial. The number of infants, although large enough to excite horror at the time of their slaughter, yet was small when compared with the hundreds and even thousands who were the victims of Herod's savage cruelty, at other times during his tyrannical reign. It is no objection therefore to the credibility of this account, that no allusion is made to it by Josephus.

17. *Then was fulfilled*, &c. The prophetic event here referred to, is found in Jer. 31 : 15 (with which compare Jer. 40 : 1). On the plains of Ramah, about six miles N. of Jerusalem, the Jewish captives were collected by Nebuzaradan and carried thence to Babylon. A beautiful reference is made by the prophet to Rachel, as weeping over her descendants thus dragged away into captivity. As the sepulchre of Rachel was between Bethlehem and Jerusalem, and as Benjamin had been united with Judah as one people from the time of the revolt of the ten tribes, she is regarded as again deploring the loss of her children in Bethlehem. The prophet's language was so applicable to the event recorded by the Evangelist, that it was considered as having a second and higher fulfillment. *Are not*, i. e. are no longer living.

19, 20. *But when Herod was dead*. See N. on v. 1. For a full and graphic account of the miserable end of this

heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

19 ¶ But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

20 Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for

---

bloodthirsty king, the reader is referred to Josephus (Antiq. xvii. 6-8). *An angel of the Lord, &c.* God had promised (v. 13) to bring word to Joseph, when he was to return from Egypt, and now, faithful to that promise, he communicates to him the death of Herod. *They are dead.* Herod is particularly referred to, the plural form being used, because his death put a pause to the efforts of his courtiers to destroy Jesus for the sake of gratifying him. In Ex. 4-19, similar words are found addressed to Moses.

22. *Archelaus.* His mother was Malthace, a Samaritan woman. *Did reign.* Herod appointed Archelaus his successor, yet Augustus confirmed him in only half his father's kingdom, viz. Idumea, Judea, and Samaria. The reference in this verse is to the time when he had possession of the whole kingdom, before Augustus deprived him of a portion and made him only an ethnarch. On account of his cruelties, he was banished, after a reign of ten years, by Augustus to Vienne, in Gaul. *He turned aside, &c.* Galilee, the northern section of Palestine, was at this time under the rule of Herod Antipas, own brother to Archelaus, to whom Augustus had given this province and Perea, with the title of Tetrarch. He was of a more generous and humane disposition than his brother Archelaus, and Joseph on that account chose Galilee, as a more secure place

they are dead which sought the young child's life.

21 And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside ° into the parts of Galilee:

23 And he came and dwelt in

o Ch. 3: 13; Lu. 2: 39.

---

of residence. It is to be remarked, that the manner in which this is related, would seem to indicate that he had never before lived there. But the language employed is shaped not so much to the historical facts of the case, as to the natural expectation of the reader, that Bethlehem or some city of Judah would have been selected as the place, where a child of such expectations would be brought up. It was a turning aside from what appeared to be his natural dwelling place. Alford tries to avoid the difficulty by supposing Matthew to have been ignorant that Joseph had ever before dwelt at Nazareth. A very short but unsatisfactory method of disposing with difficulties of such a nature.

23. *Dwelt, i. e.* made it his permanent residence. *Nazareth.* A small town in Galilee, N. of the plain of Esdraelon, and about midway between the lake of Tiberias and the Mediterranean. "It is situated in a narrow basin of about a mile in length, surrounded by hills, the town being built upon the steep sides of those that border the valley on the west." Howe's Orient. and Sac. Scenes, p. 183. Its population is variously estimated at from three to five thousand. *That it might be fulfilled.* As the prophecy here referred to is not found in the Old Testament, some difficulty has arisen in ascertaining the exact sense of the passage. Of the various explanations, two only seem worthy of atten-

a city called <sup>p</sup> Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled <sup>q</sup> which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

<sup>p</sup> John 1: 45.      <sup>q</sup> Ju. 13: 5; 1 Sa. 1: 11.

tion. One class of interpreters, adhering closely to the etymological signification of the word *Nazareth* (a Heb. word, denoting *sprout, branch*), think that reference is had to those passages in Isa. 11: 1; 53: 2; Jer. 23: 5; 33: 15; Zech. 3: 8; 6: 12, where the Messiah is designated as a *branch* or *shoot*. He shall be called a *Nazarene* would then be equivalent to saying: He shall be called a *Branch*. The other and more judicious class of expositors regard the expression, as fulfilling the substance of things spoken by the prophets. The Jews held the city of Nazareth in utter contempt. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" said Nathaniel to Philip (John 1: 46). The reason for this may have been its diminutive size and importance, its distance from Jerusalem, and more especially its mixed population of Jews and Gentiles, and their more rough and uncouth habits, even when compared with the other cities of Galilee. A Nazarene became, therefore, a common term of contempt. Jesus, by his long residence in this place, became a Nazarene with all the odium attached to a residence in so despised a town. Thus were fulfilled all those predictions of the low and despised condition, in which the Messiah should make his appearance. In his being called a Nazarene, began especially the fulfillment of that great prophecy, "He was despised and rejected of men," which, throughout his whole official life, received additional confirmation, until his death upon the cross. This view is supported by the plural form, *the prophets*, which seems clearly to show that no single prophecy, but the spirit of all, is referred to.

The events narrated in this chapter are most remarkable and interesting. The visit of the Magi; their anxiety to find the child whose star they had seen in their eastern home; the agitation and

## CHAPTER III.

IN those days came <sup>a</sup> John the Baptist, preaching <sup>b</sup> in the wilderness of Judea,

<sup>a</sup> Ma. 1: 4, 15; Lu. 3: 2, 3; John 1: 23.

<sup>b</sup> Jos. 14: 10.

alarm of Herod, and the commotion into which all Jerusalem was thrown by their inquiry; the reappearance of the star to guide them into Bethlehem; the homage they rendered to the young child; their warning from God to depart home by another route, by which the bloody design of Herod was frustrated; the flight of Joseph and his family into Egypt; the horrid massacre of the infants, for whom Rachel is introduced as weeping anew; the death of Herod, and the return of the family from Egypt, are narrated with a beauty, brevity, and clearness of detail, elsewhere rarely to be found.

The providence of God, in taking care of those dear to Him, is also strikingly exemplified. In times of trial, the believer may draw from this chapter the most cheering encouragement. In contrast with Herod's fearful end, he may see how the child Jesus was preserved of God, for his great work of founding a kingdom of righteousness, which shall have no end. His faith, also, may be revived and strengthened by the lesson of God's protecting care over the wise men, who had come to pay their homage to Him who was to be the Savior of the world. The ready and cheerful obedience which Joseph, in the most trying circumstances, rendered to the divine command, is also worthy of the closest imitation. The thoughtful reader, who would derive spiritual food from God's Word, will not pass over these and other points, without discerning the hand of Providence in the whole affair, and drawing lessons of instruction suited to his condition as a dependent creature, whose destiny is in the hand of the Lord.

## CHAPTER III.

1-12. THE MINISTRY AND BAPTISM OF JOHN. Mark 1: 1-8; Luke 3: 1-17.

1. *In those days.* The close of the previous chapter refers this to the time

2 And saying, Repent ye: for 'the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

c Da. 2: 44; ch. 4: 17, & 10: 7.

in which our Lord dwelt in Nazareth. How he spent his time, during his residence in that town, we are not informed. In Luke (2: 41-52) it is said, that he went with his parents to Jerusalem to the feast of the passover, and some incidents connected with that visit are mentioned. After this, we are informed that he returned with them to Nazareth, and was subject unto them, increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. As his father was a carpenter (13: 55), he doubtless followed the same trade (Mark 6: 3), and thus, by personal acquaintance with the toils and trials of life, was fitted for the great work which he had to accomplish. *Came*, i. e. made his public appearance. *John the Baptist*, so called, to distinguish him from John the Evangelist. The introduction of the word *Baptist* or *Baptizer*, without comment, shows that Matthew was writing for those who understood the practice and use of this rite, as well as the historical personage here introduced. This remarkable man, to whom was assigned the office of preparing the way for Christ, was the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth, and born six months before Jesus. How he spent his youth, we are not informed. His whole life, from infancy to the time of his public ministry, is passed over in absolute silence, except that we are informed by Luke (1: 80), that he "grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." It would seem from this, that his mental capacities were of a high order, that he led a solitary life, and by the study of the Scriptures, prayer and meditation, was preparing himself for the stern duties of reformer, to which he had been divinely appointed. *Preaching*. This word is used in the New Testament, not only of long and continued public discourses, but of the proclamation of religious truth by conversation with individuals, families,

3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, "The voice of one crying

d Is. 40: 3; Ma. 1: 3; Lu. 3: 4; John 1: 23.

groups of persons, whom he might fall in with as he passed from place to place. *In the wilderness of Judea*, where he had spent much of his previous life (Luke 1: 80). This was an uninhabited, sterile region, lying on the high ground, west of the Dead Sea and the valley of the Jordan. The scene of John's labors was probably that part which lay along the Jordan, some six or eight miles above the northern portion of the Dead Sea, on the great road leading from the fertile region east of the Jordan, to Jerusalem. The word *desert*, in Scripture use, is to be taken in a wider sense than what we usually attach to the word, which is that of an uninhabited wilderness, where no human being resides. In the Bible, it is applied to widely extended commons or pasture lands, sparsely inhabited districts, not of necessity sterile, although frequently so to a greater or less extent.

2. *Repent*. John's great business was to call the people to repentance. The nation had become exceedingly wicked, given to traditionary forms and ceremonies, and to a corresponding degree, neglectful of the spirit and requirements of God's moral law. In order to be prepared for the spiritual rule and instructions of the Messiah, it was necessary that the people should repent and forsake their vain forms and ceremonies. The word here translated *repent*, designates a change in one's views and principles, and implies a radical reformation of life and conduct. There is another Greek word also, which is translated *repent*, signifying a mere feeling of sorrow or remorse, not accompanied or followed by true reformation. Such was the repentance manifested by Judas after his betrayal of our Lord, and of Saul in view of his treatment of David (1 Sam. 24: 16-21). *The kingdom of heaven*. Sometimes denominated by our Lord, *kingdom of God*. The phrase was well understood



in the wilderness, <sup>e</sup> Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

<sup>e</sup> Lu. 1:76.

by the Jews to refer to the reign of the Messiah, and seems to have arisen from the prophecy of Daniel (2:44; 7:13, 14, 27), where he speaks of a divinely constituted kingdom, which the God of heaven was to set up in the earth, of which Messiah was to be king. This Messianic kingdom was to continue through all time, and reach its consummation of glory, when all his enemies were put under the Redeemer's feet, and Death, the last and greatest foe, was destroyed. Sometimes the phrase "Kingdom of Heaven," is to be taken in its most enlarged sense, as embracing the kingdom from its commencement on earth, to its glorious and triumphant manifestation in heaven. Sometimes it refers to the beginning only of this divine spiritual kingdom. It is used also of the mode of its establishment on earth, the principles on which it is founded, its progressive development, and its pervading and all-controlling power. The prerequisites for admission to its privileges, the ground on which its rewards are bestowed, the measure of responsibility and watchfulness demanded of its subjects, are all at different times designated by this general term. These and other special significations will be noticed in the passages as they occur. Here it is used by John Baptist in the sense of, *the commencement of the Messianic dispensation*. This he proclaims to be near at hand. It is doubtless true that John's views of the nature of this dispensation were highly spiritual; yet it can hardly be supposed, that he was entirely free from the Jewish notion of a temporal Messianic kingdom.

3. *For this is he*, &c. As these are the words of the Evangelist and not of John, the form *for this was he*, would be the more strict expression of time. Alford well calls this "the prophetic present, representing to us the place

4 And <sup>f</sup>the same John <sup>g</sup>had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins;

<sup>f</sup> Ma. 1:6. <sup>g</sup> 2 Ki. 1:8; Zec. 13:4.

which the Baptist fills in the divine purposes." The quotation is from Isa. 40:3, and is also made by Mark and Luke with this difference, that Mark begins with a quotation from Malachi, and Luke carries his citation further than either Matthew or Mark. The words of the prophecy are founded on the employment of persons by kings and generals, to precede them in their journey or march, in order to remove obstacles in the way, repair roads, level steep and otherwise inaccessible places, fill up morasses, in short, to prepare a way, suitable and convenient for the royal personage to travel, or the army to march. The primary, and in some respects doubtless the literal application of this prophecy, was to the return from the Babylonish captivity. Its spiritual application to the advent of the Messiah, is too obvious to require explanation.

4. *Had his raiment*, &c. This coarse garment made from the shaggier camel's hair, was worn also by the ancient prophets, especially Elijah (2 Kings 1:8; Zech. 13:14), in whose spirit John was to come. *Leathern girdle*. This belt was necessary, to keep in place the full flowing robes worn in the East. John's girdle was in keeping with the coarseness of his raiment (2 Kings 1:8). His whole apparel was in accordance with his holy office. It would not have comported with the solemn nature of his message, and his stern rebuke of sin, for him to have been clad in costly garments. The desert had been for years his dwelling place, and his raiment and food were of the coarsest kind. *Locusts*. The law of Moses permitted three kinds of locusts to be eaten (Lev. 11:22). They are eaten by the Arabs at the present day. *Wild honey*. This is generally referred to honey deposited by bees in the clefts of rocks and in the hollow of trees. See Ps. 81:18; Deut. 32:13; Jud. 14:8; 1 Sam.

and his meat was <sup>a</sup> locusts and  
 ' wild honey.

5 <sup>k</sup> Then went out to him Jeru-

<sup>h</sup> Le. 11: 22. <sup>i</sup> 1 Sa. 14: 25, 26.  
<sup>k</sup> Ma. 1: 5; Lu. 3: 7.

14: 25-27. Dr. Jahn with less reason refers it to what is called *honey dew*, i. e. the excrements which certain little insects emit so very copiously upon the leaves of trees, that it flows down upon the ground. Howe contends that this wild honey was *new gathered dates*, a nutritious and wholesome article of food, requiring no culinary art, which, as Josephus says, "when pressed, yield an excellent kind of honey, not much inferior to the other kinds of honey." See Howe's Orient. Scenes, pp. 385-408.

5. *Went out to him to attend upon his preaching, and to receive baptism from his hand. Jerusalem and all Judea.* The inhabitants of the metropolis, as well as of the country, flocked to him in great numbers. Many were actuated by a sincere desire to receive religious instruction. Others resorted to him only to gratify their curiosity, or like the Scribes and Pharisees (v. 7), to cavil and find opportunity to accuse him. See 11: 18. *All the region round about Jordan*, i. e. through which the Jordan flowed, but not included in Judea.

6. *Were baptized.* Received the rite of baptism. John's baptism is called (Acts 19: 4), "the baptism of repentance." They who received it acknowledged the duty of repentance, and professed their determination to perform it. In regard to the mode of baptism practised by John, it may be briefly remarked, that while the word *baptizo* in the Greek classic authors is generally employed in the sense of *to dip, to immerse* any thing in whole or in part, yet there are instances enough of a departure from this signification to warrant its usage by the New Testament writers, in its kindred sense of ablation, either by immersion, effusion, or sprinkling. In which of these ways John administered the rite, is to be determined by an appeal to the circum-

stances in which it was performed, and the method of purification of persons and sacred utensils (see N. on Mark 7: 4), practised by the Jews, which would naturally be followed by John in the administration of the rite. In this aspect of the case, I can find no satisfactory proof that John practised immersion, especially as he was applying an ordinance, which for centuries had been administered by the application of water in the way of effusion, washing, or sprinkling.

6 <sup>l</sup> And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

<sup>l</sup> Ac. 19: 4, 18.

This is confirmed by the words *in Jordan*, where the name of the river is put for *water*, and the preposition *in* denotes the notion of means in the sense of *with*. The passage may then be translated: *were baptized of him with (water from) Jordan*. If the word *baptize* signifies *to dip, to plunge into*, we should have expected, according to Greek usage, the preposition *eis* with the accusative case, instead of *en* with the dative. Now, in every instance except one, this latter form is employed, which never has the meaning *into*, unless following a verb of motion, it indicates a state of rest in the place whither the motion is directed. But a state of rest *in* or *under* the water for the subjects of baptism, would be so manifestly destructive of life, that such a use of the words is not to be entertained for a moment. The only instance, as above stated, where *eis, to* or *into*, is used in this connection, is in Mark 1: 10, where a reference to the original will show, that it is used to express the idea of previous approach to the river, on the part of Christ, the sense being, "Jesus came from Galilee to Jordan, and was baptized," &c. A form precisely like this use of *en* after a verb of motion, is found in Homer, except that it occurs with the word *bapto*, instead of *baptizo*, which, however, does not affect the point here to

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto

*m* Ch. 12 : 34, & 28 : 33 ; Lu. 3 : 7, 8, 9.

be illustrated. He compares the hissing of the heated stake, when plunged into the eye of the Cyclops, to that of red-hot iron when *baptized in (en) water*, i. e. plunged into water and held there, as the stake was held and twirled about in the eye of the Cyclops. The use then of *en* with *baptizo*, precludes the signification *to plunge*, unless, as has been stated, the idea of subsequent rest under the water also accompanies it. We are driven then to seek a meaning for *baptizo*, which will not force such a sense upon the passage. If we refer it to the application of water to the person, instead of the plunging a person into water, then *en* becomes significant of *means* or *instrumentality*, a use which it has in innumerable instances. This view receives additional proof from Luke 3 : 16 (on which see N.), where the expression : *I baptize you with water*, in the original cannot be forced to signify *immersion in water*, as every one who is at all acquainted with the Greek language will see. Additional light will be thrown upon the mode of John's baptism by a consideration of v. 12.

If it be asked why John chose proximity to the Jordan, if it was not to obtain a depth of water adequate to the performance of this rite by immersion, it may be replied, that in a country like Palestine, where water was not always and in all places found in sufficient quantity for the wants of large gatherings of people with their beasts of burden, it became necessary to select a location near some river or lake (see John 3 : 23). The wilderness of Judea, where John had spent much of his life, had no lake, fountain, or stream more suitable for the wants of a large concourse of people, like that which thronged around him, than the Jordan itself. This much may be said, that it was not necessary for the Bap-

them, <sup>m</sup> O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from <sup>n</sup> the wrath to come ?

*n* Ro. 5 : 9 ; 1 Th. 1 : 10.

tist to be by a great river in order to baptize in the way immersionists claim, for a small stream or rivulet, a place being dug in its channel, would afford a convenient pool or baptistry for this purpose. But the wants of from twenty to fifty thousand people with their beasts of burden could not be met, except by a stream or spring of considerable size and depth. The vicinity of Jordan being selected for this purpose, the rite would of course be administered, probably upon its brink, with water taken fresh from its current. There is then no evidence from the passage, nor from the circumstance that John chose the bank of the Jordan as the place in which to preach and baptize, that he practised immersion, but on the contrary, much which contravenes that idea, or renders it, to say the least, highly improbable.

*Confessing their sins.* This was the condition on which they were to be baptized. There is no doubt that John preached faith in the coming Messiah, as revealed in prophecy (see v. 11), yet the prerequisite for this baptism was the confession of sin and its renunciation. After our Lord's ascension, a profession of faith in Him was a prerequisite to Christian baptism. The confession of sin here spoken of, must have been general rather than particular, as the numbers which flocked around him to receive the rite, would leave no time to enter with minute speciality into each case. This appears to have been the fact also from Luke 3 : 10-14, where classes of persons are said to have come to him asking what they should do, and receiving a reply applicable to their respective pursuits and conditions.

7. *Pharisees.* These were a numerous and powerful sect, pretending to a great regard for the Mosaic law, but holding, in addition, to a mass of vain traditions to which they attached

8 Bring forth therefore fruits  
 || meet for repentance :

9 And think not to say within  
 yourselves, ° We have Abraham

|| Or, *answerable to amendment of life.*

equal authority as to the Mosaic code. Their apparent sanctity gave them great influence with the common people, which they did not fail to employ in furtherance of their selfish and profligate aims. Our Lord compared them (v. 23 : 27) to whited sepulchres, outwardly beautiful, but within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. *Sadducees.* This sect, which embraced many of the chief men of the nation, was opposed to the Pharisees, in that they rejected the unwritten or traditinary part of the law, and held the written Scriptures as alone of binding obligation. They denied the existence of any spiritual being, whether good or bad, except God, and hence denied the immortality of the soul, as well also as the doctrine of the resurrection (22 : 23 ; Acts 23 : 8). They denied also the doctrine of fate, which was held by the Pharisees, and believed in the most unrestrained freedom of the human will. Both these sects had existed at least 150 years before Christ, since Josephus (*Antiq.* xiii. 10. § 5, 6) says, that John Hyrcanus went over from the Pharisees to the Sadducees, and thereby created much trouble to his family. There was a third sect called the Essenes, who conformed in doctrine to the Pharisees, but avoided a residence in large cities, held their property in common, practised celibacy, rejected the temple worship, and were in general of upright morals. They disapproved of oaths, although persons of strict veracity. These Essenes which may be denominated the Jewish monks, are not particularly referred to by the New Testament writers. *Coming to his baptism,* i. e. to receive baptism at his hands. Their hypocrisy in doing this received such an exposure and rebuke from John, that most if not all of them went away unbaptized (see Luke 7 : 30).

to *our* father : for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

o John 8 : 33, 39 ; Ac. 13 : 26 ; Ro. 4 : 1, 11, 6.

*Generation of vipers.* They were morally speaking a progeny of vipers, rather than the descendants of Abraham, from whom they boasted their descent (v. 9). *Who hath warned, &c.* This was an exclamation of surprise at the coming to his baptism of such wicked men as the Pharisees and Sadducees. The *wrath to come* refers to God's punitive justice, displayed in the punishment of the wicked in the world to come. Some are disposed to limit the expression here, to the temporal judgment about to be inflicted upon the Jewish nation. But this is too restricted a view, and does not comport with the great end of John's preaching, to rouse the nation to repentance and reformation, by considerations drawn from the rewards and retributions of the future life. The destruction of the Jewish commonwealth, as a type or symbol of God's greater and more abiding wrath in the world to come, may be included, however, in these words of John.

8. This verse teaches that a profession of repentance is of no account, unless accompanied by a reformation of life, and works worthy of such a profession. "By their fruits ye shall know them," (7 : 20).

9. *Think not to say within yourselves* (i. e. to one another and in your hearts). The sentiment is: Think not that your descent from Abraham will excuse you from the duty of repentance, for God can raise up children to Abraham, if necessary, from the very stones or pebbles, who would be like him in faith and obedience, and thus be his descendants in a higher sense than those who are related to him by physical descent only. This was verified in the rejection of the Jews and the calling in of the Gentiles. See Rom. chaps. 9, 10, 11. *To our father,* i. e. for our father. *Of these stones,*



10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees : therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

11 <sup>r</sup> I indeed baptize you with

<sup>p</sup> Ch. 7 : 19 ; Lu. 13 : 7, 9 ; John 15 : 6.  
<sup>q</sup> Ma. 1 : 8 ; Lu. 3 : 16 ; John 1 : 15, 26, 33 ; Ac. 1 : 5 ; & 11 : 16 ; & 19 : 4.

water unto repentance : but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear : he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire :

<sup>r</sup> Is. 4 : 4 ; & 44 : 3 ; Mal. 3 : 2 ; Ac. 2 : 3, 4 ; 1 Co. 12 : 13.

i. e. God can accomplish his purposes, in a way which seems as impossible to man, as to form human beings from stones.

10. The excision hinted at in the preceding verse, which was to cut off the rebellious Jews from the promises and privileges granted to the true seed of Abraham, is here represented as about to take place. *The ax is laid unto* (i. e. aimed or levelled against) *the root*, &c. Something more is meant by this expression, than an ax laid down by the trunk of a tree ready for use. The original implies that the ax is already directed against the tree, that the blow is ready to be struck, which nothing can avert but the most speedy repentance. *Unto the root*. As we say, the tree was to be cut down root and branch. The excision was to be complete and final. *Therefore every tree*, &c. An inference from what precedes. If God is about to make this tremendous excision, he will act on the common and universally acknowledged principle of destroying every tree which produces not good fruit. From this common practice, John illustrates the process by which God will purge his visible church. Every worthless fruit tree, as well as every dead or unproductive branch, will be removed, and living trees, planted by the rivers of waters and bringing forth their fruit in their season (Ps. 1 : 3), will take their place.

11. Between this and the preceding verse, Luke (2 : 10-15) places the inquiry of the people, publicans, and soldiers, of John, as to what were their respective duties, after which, as the people were musing in their hearts, whether he was the Christ or not, John

solved their doubts, by saying, *I indeed baptize you*, &c. This reference to Luke removes the apparent abruptness with which Matthew continues the narrative. The general sentiment of this verse is the contrast between John's baptism by water, and that of Jesus Christ by the Holy Ghost. *With water*. The best critics unite in regarding the water as the means of baptism. In other words, the element of water is *instrumental* and not *local*. *Unto repentance*, i. e. as a solemn ratifying profession of having exercised the repentance and self-renunciation which John preached. There is also contained in this expression the additional idea of a *baptism which obligates to repentance* (so Mark, *baptism of repentance*). *After me* in point of time. *But mightier* and more exalted in all that pertains to personal worth or official dignity than I. *Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear*. A strong expression of his inferiority to Jesus. In the East, when a person entered a house, he was met at the door by a servant who unloosed his sandals (Mark 1 : 7 ; Luke 3 : 16), laid them aside, and then washed his feet. The visitor then washed his own face and hands, after which he proceeded into the presence of the master of the house. To go into his presence barefoot was regarded as essential a mark of respect, as for us to uncover our heads when we enter a house. The shoes or sandals did not cover the whole foot, but consisted of soles bound on with leathern thongs. These soles were leather, but in their cheapest form, were composed of pieces of wood. *He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost*, i. e. with the effusions of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12 : 13). This received a remarkable fulfill-

12 \* Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into

s Mal. 3 : 3.

ment on the day of Pentecost. *And with fire.* Some refer this to the fiery appearances, which descended like cloven tongues upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. Others suppose a reference to the purifying influences of the Spirit, consuming like fire the dross and impurities of sin. It is thought by some to designate the wrath of God, which like consuming fire will fall upon the wicked. The first of these interpretations is too limited and local. Against the last, it has been well remarked, that the antithesis between John's baptism and that of the Holy Ghost, does not refer to the persons represented by *you*, but only to the two kinds of baptism referred to. The persons addressed are the same. Now, although this was spoken to the whole people, comprising the wicked Pharisees as well as others, yet in sense, it must be referred to those who were actually baptized; in other words, to those whom John regarded as worthy of baptism, for to no others would he have administered the rite. Are we to suppose that he would consign some of these persons, whom he had just baptized, to the fiery, consuming baptism of God's wrath? Yet to this conclusion are we forced, by attributing such a sense to the baptism by fire. Observe also the close connexion in the words, "with the Holy Ghost and fire" (for it must be remembered that *with* is added by our translators, and is not in the original). It is not: he shall baptize *some of you* (i. e. those who truly repent) with the Holy Ghost, and *others of you* (who remain hardened and impenitent) with fire; but *he shall baptize you* (the same persons whom I have baptized with water unto repentance) *with the Holy Ghost and fire.* The next verse, containing the idea of separation and excision, is not an expanded repetition, but an advance on the sentiment of v. 11, which is evidently the superior dig-

the garner; but he will 'burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

t Mal. 4 : 1; ch. 13 : 30.

nity of Christ in his person and office, and the higher gifts and blessings of his baptism. We must conclude then that the purifying, sanctifying influences of the Spirit are meant, which could be symbolized by no better element than fire; the searching, cleansing, dross-consuming power of which is well known, and often referred to in God's Word. See N. on Mark 9 : 49.

12. *Whose fan is in his hand.* The separation of the wheat from the chaff by a winnowing process, is here employed as a figure, to illustrate the searching power of truth, and the final separation of the righteous and the wicked. The *fan* was a winnowing shovel, with which the grain, as it came from the threshing-floor, was thrown up against the wind, in order that the chaff might be blown aside, and the wheat cleansed. *Will thoroughly purge his floor*, i. e. will cleanse his grain by the fan already in his hand. The word *threshing-floor* is here put figuratively for the production of the floor, viz : *corn, grain.* This threshing-floor was in the open field, without an enclosure or covering, about thirty or forty paces in diameter, the ground being levelled or beaten down. After the grain was threshed out, it was thrown into the centre of this area, and then winnowed. *Garner*; literally, *a place of laying by or up*, and hence as here, *granary, barn.* *Chaff.* This refers to the chaff and stubble mingled with the grain after threshing, and which, being good neither for fodder nor for the manufacture of bricks, nor for any purpose for which straw was required, was burned up. Wicked men are often referred to in the Scriptures by chaff (Ps. 1 : 4 ; 35 : 5 ; Job 21 : 18 ; Hos. 13 : 3), while the good, by a like figure of speech, are designated by grain, wheat, and similar terms, Lev. 13 : 25, 29, 30. *Unquenchable fire.* Some translate, *irre-*

13 ¶“Then cometh Jesus \*from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbade him, say-  
u Ma. 1: 9; Lu. 3: 21. v Ch. 2: 22.

*sistible fire*, but the common translation, *unquenchable, eternal*, is the true one. The doctrine of eternal punishment is here taught beyond a doubt, and it is worthy of note, that John, in the very opening of his ministry, teaches that the Messiah is to appear, not for the gathering of the righteous into his kingdom only, but for taking vengeance upon all his enemies. In harmony also with this are the teachings of our Savior and his apostles. In contrast with the glory and blessedness of the righteous, is the lost condition and endless suffering of those who reject Christ, set forth in the plainest terms, and under imagery the most dire and dreadful which human language can express.

12-17. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS. Mark 1: 9-11; Luke 3: 21-23.

13. Jesus is now introduced to our attention, as coming to be baptized by John. If the latter entered upon his ministry, as is supposed, in the spring, and when he had completed his thirtieth year, it is probable that our Lord came to his baptism in the autumn, or about six months later. He would thus be about thirty years of age, as stated by Luke 3: 23. *To be baptized*, denotes the object or purpose for which he came to John. Although being sinless he needed not baptism as a symbol of personal reformation and purification, yet as he took upon him our nature, and was made sin for us, being made in the likeness of sinful flesh, he condescended to observe all the rites and ceremonies imposed by the law upon those whom he came to redeem. He was now, also, to be inaugurated to his priestly office, and he received the rite of baptism, on the same general principle that the priests were inducted to their office (Ex. 29: 1-37).

14. *John forbade him*; literally, *attempted or began to hinder him wholly*

ing, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be* so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil

from his purpose. It was such a reversal of the relation subsisting between them, that John could not consent for a moment to assume this official superiority. *I have need*, i. e. it would comport better with my sinful and fallen nature. *To be baptized of thee*. It does not appear that our Savior ever administered the ordinance of baptism, but left its performance to his disciples (John 4: 2). Paul also seldom baptized, being sent by Christ to preach the gospel, and not to perform this rite (1 Cor. 1: 17), which was administered probably by those who attended him as helps in his ministry. One thing seems clearly to be taught by this, that neither Christ nor his apostles regarded baptism as indispensably essential to salvation. *Comest thou to me*, being as thou art my superior? See N. on v. 11. This question is highly expressive of John's surprise at the humble demeanor of Jesus in thus coming to him.

15. *Suffer it to be so now*. In the original, *suffer now*, i. e. for the present let such be our relation. The word *now*, or *for the present*, implies that while John's inferiority to Jesus was true and real, yet as he was the minister of God's law, while Christ, by coming to be baptized, was a doer or fulfiller of that law, the relation of John, as the baptizer, and of Jesus as the one to be baptized, was only a present and temporary one. *For thus it becometh*, &c. Our Lord teaches in this, that we are to obey the requirements of the divine law, whatever may be our station or influence. No regard should be paid to relative superiority in the discharge of duty. *All righteousness*, i. e. all the requirements of the law; every thing which is right and proper. Preliminary to the induction of the priests to their office, they performed the ceremony of ablution (Ex. 29: 4). Our Savior followed this custom (see N. on v. 13). We are

all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 <sup>v</sup>And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw <sup>z</sup>the Spirit of God de-

*y* Ma. 1: 10. *z* Is. 11: 2; & 42; 1 Lu. 8: 22; Jn. 1: 32, 33.

not for a moment to suppose, that he requested at John's hand the baptism *unto repentance*, spoken of in v. 11, but merely as a symbol of his induction to the sacred office upon which he was now entering.

16. *Straightway*, i. e. immediately. *Out of the water*; more literally, *away from the water*, i. e. from the margin or bank, on which he stood while receiving the rite, for had the idea *out* of the water been intended, the preposition *ek*, instead of *apo*, would have been used. Much less admissible is the notion, that complete immersion is here implied, for what necessity in that case for the word *immediately*, as though the person baptized either could or would desire to remain under or in water any length of time. *The heavens were opened unto him*. The firmament seemed to be dispanted, so as to reveal a visible communication between heaven and earth. In the conception of those times, the concave above was regarded as fixed and solid. Hence such expressions as "the windows of heaven were opened" (Gen. 7: 11), "he had opened the doors of heaven" (Ps. 78: 23; see also 2 Kings 7: 7; Ezek. 1: 1); "a tower whose top may reach unto heaven" (Gen. 11: 4). See N. on 6: 9. *He saw*. This evidently refers to Jesus, although John also witnessed the descent of the Spirit (John 1: 32). *Like a dove*. A visible form is evidently intended, but we have no means of knowing whether it had the real appearance of a dove, or was thus likened from its tremulous, hovering, dove-like descent. The collocation of the words in the original would favor the latter supposition, were it not that Luke says expressly (3: 22), that the Spirit descended *bodily*, or *like a body*.

scending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 <sup>a</sup>And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, <sup>b</sup>This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

*a* Jn. 12: 28. *b* Ps. 2: 7; Is. 42; 1 ch. 12: 13, & 17: 5; Ma. 1: 11; Lu. 9: 35; Ep. 1: 6; Col. 1: 13; 2 Pe. 1: 17.

That Evangelist also says (3: 21), that it was while he was praying that the heavens were thus opened. It is worthy of note, that the two principal manifestations or attestations of our Savior's glory while on earth, viz. this descent of the Spirit at his baptism, and the transfiguration, were made while he was engaged in prayer. A remarkable and impressive comment on the power and privilege of this duty.

17. In addition to this celestial appearance, a voice was heard from heaven. The words uttered were afterwards repeated on two different occasions, once upon the mount of transfiguration, and again a short time before his death. In the latter instance, the people supposed it to be thunder. It is not improbable that it was heard by the people, as well as by John, at his baptism. There is a slight verbal difference in the words of this voice from heaven, as given by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The sense is, however, the same. A similar verbal variation is found in the inscription on the cross, as given by the four Evangelists. Evidence is thus furnished, by these slight verbal discrepancies, that there was no collusion among the writers, or a servile copying the one from another. The gospels are shown to be independent narrations; while their agreement in sense renders it equally certain, that the writers were under the influence of one superintending, controlling Spirit.

#### CHAPTER IV.

4-11. We come now in the sacred narration to one of the most awful and mysterious events, that has ever happened since the creation of man, the TEMPTATION OF THE SON OF GOD by the



## CHAPTER IV.

**WHEN** was <sup>a</sup> Jesus led up of <sup>b</sup> the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

<sup>a</sup> Ma. 1:12, &c.; Lu. 4:1, &c. <sup>b</sup> See 1 Ki. 18:12; Ez. 3:14, & 8:3; & 11:1, 24; & 40:2, & 43:5; Ac. 8:39.

great adversary of all good. As the first Adam was tempted and fell, thus bringing ruin upon his posterity, it formed a part of the divine plan, that the second Adam should also suffer temptation, in order by his victory to prove himself worthy of his office of Redeemer of mankind. In the very threshold of his ministry, close upon his induction into the Messianic office by the rite of baptism, he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, to enter upon this trial of his obedience. It was not done through presumption on the part of Jesus, or as an ostentatious display of his power to resist temptation, but to enable him to be a merciful and faithful high priest, and to succor those who are tempted, by an experience on his part of the nature and power of temptation. No human being knows the dreadful conflict of those days of trial, nor with what earnest, wrestling, agonizing prayer, the blessed Savior was enabled to come forth victorious from this struggle with the powers of darkness. But we know in the light of such passages as Heb. 2:18; 4:15; 5:8, that Jesus was fitted for his work by this season of trial, and this alone should remove all doubts in respect to the wisdom and goodness of God, in permitting it to take place.

The subject of the Temptation is not without its exegetical difficulties, but by keeping in view the great text, "but was in all points tempted as we are" (Heb. 4:15), and adhering to sound principles of interpretation, we may hope to arrive at its true explanation.

1-11. Mark 1:12, 13; Luke 4:1-14.

1. *Then was Jesus led, &c.* This took place immediately after his baptism. See Mark 1:12, where he is said to have been driven *immediately* by the Spirit into the wilderness, reference

2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the

being had to the irresistible impulse, with which he was hurried thither. Compare also John 1:29, 35, 44. *The Spirit*, which had descended upon him after baptism. *The wilderness*. Probably the desert west of Jericho. *To be tempted*. The primary signification of the word *tempt*, is *to make trial* of one, *to test* his principles; the secondary sense, *to tempt* one to commit sin. In the first sense, God is said (Gen. 22:1) to have tempted Abraham; in the second sense, Satan is said to tempt, and thus the word is used in the passage before us. It does not, however, follow that the person thus tempted of Satan or wicked men, necessarily yields to the temptation. The adversary is often baffled in his seductive arts, and driven from the field, where he had hoped to obtain an easy victory. Nor is the susceptibility of being tempted, that is, the possession of emotions and affections which may be excited and turned in a wrong direction, a sin. It is incident to human nature, at least in its present state of probation, to have inclinations, desires, emotions, passions, which are continually acted upon for good or evil by moral influences either from without or within; but this, while it renders a man susceptible of temptation, does not constitute him a sinner. Now we are constantly to bear in mind that our Savior possessed a human nature, and was as capable of being tempted to sin as we are (Heb. 2:17), and that he really "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He did not yield to temptation, and therefore committed no sin. But he was truly and really tempted, that is, such things were presented to his mind, as were adapted to induce him to sin. Otherwise he could not have been tempted in all points, as we are. A

Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4 But he answered and said,

c De. 8: 3.

denial of this would be a denial of the reality of the temptation, and make it, as it is regarded by some, a mere vision, phantasy, or allegorical representation.

Of the reality of the temptation there can then be no question. The manner in which it was done, next claims attention. It has been the opinion of not a few, that the devil assumed a bodily form, and that the temptation was external and not internal. But this view is not only liable to many objections drawn from the narration itself, but is contradicted in the most express terms by the words to which we have referred: "in all points tempted like as we are." Since the first temptation in Eden, we have no evidence that the devil was ever permitted to assume a bodily shape, for the purpose of tempting men, or that any person was ever thus tempted. We must conclude, then, that the temptation of Christ consisted in mental suggestions, addressed with diabolical cunning to the peculiar emotions which swelled his soul, as he was about to enter upon his official work, and concealed as to their true character, by texts of Scripture which accompanied their presentation. They were unseen and subtle, working their way into the mind of Jesus, at first hardly distinguishable from his own thoughts, but soon betraying their source and character, by their contravention to God's law. The power of this internal temptation was far greater than it would have been, if presented openly by the tempter in bodily shape.

*The devil*; literally, *the accuser, slanderer*. The word is applied by the New Testament writers to *Satan*, the enemy of God and every thing good. He is represented as subtle, malignant, powerful, the prince of fallen angels (9: 34, on which see Note), continually engaged in seducing men from truth, and in endeavoring to thwart the merciful designs of God in saving our race

It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

from ruin. He now comes in the solitude of the desert, and exercises all his art and power to draw our blessed Savior into sin.

2. *When he had fasted, &c.* It is uncertain whether this refers to an entire or partial fast. The word may be used undoubtedly in the sense of abstaining from meat, or pleasant food, or regular meals (1 Sam. 31: 13; Dan. 10: 3; Acts 27: 33). Some give it this sense here, and think that Jesus subsisted on such coarse and scanty food, as he found in the desert. But the clause added in Luke, "in those days he did eat nothing," seems to favor the idea, if it be not an absolute assertion, that he totally abstained from food, and was miraculously preserved during his long fast. The expression "*forty days and forty nights*," seems also to point to total abstinence from food. *Afterward*. During the days of his fasting, he was doubtless in a state of ecstasy, so as to be insensible to hunger.

3. *The tempter*; literally, *the one who tempts*, i. e. is in the habit of seducing to sin. This was Satan, whose great business is to tempt men to sin. The temptations here enumerated took place at the close of the forty days. It appears from Mark and Luke, that he was tempted also during the forty days (Mark 1: 13; Luke 4: 2), but now at the close, new and more powerful assaults are made upon his integrity. *If thou be the Son of God*. These words do not imply doubt, but are equivalent to, "seeing that thou art the Son of God." Reference may be had, possibly, to the voice from heaven, which declared Christ's Sonship. Satan's use of the phrase in this and the second temptation, would seem to imply that he was not ignorant of that divine voice. The absence of the article in the original, however, leads some to think that nothing more is meant by the expres-

5 Then the devil taketh him up <sup>d</sup> into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, *d* Ne. 11:1, 18; 1s. 48:2, & 52:1; ch. 27:53; Re. 11:2.

sion than a son of God, i. e., a pious man. But the spirit and wants of the narrative are not met, by sinking this wondrous assault upon our Savior's integrity, to a level with an ordinary temptation, addressed to a merely pious man. Nor is the absence of the article any objection to its higher sense, as may be seen by referring to 27:40, 43; Mark 1:1; John 10:36. *Command that these stones be made bread.* As Jesus had fasted for the space of forty days, he must at this time have been exceedingly hungry, if not in an almost starving condition. The temptation, therefore, to satisfy the cravings of hunger by a miracle, must have been to one in his situation very strong. But had he supplied his wants by working a miracle, he would have sinned, inasmuch as it would have manifested a distrust in the providential care of his Heavenly Father. This appears from his reply to the tempter, the substance of which is, that obedience to God will always insure a supply of our physical wants. Compare 6:31-33, on which see Notes. It may be further observed, that neither Christ nor his apostles wrought any miracle for self-preservation. From this we may infer, that such interpositions in their own behalf were contrary to the divine will. Had Christ changed the stones into bread, he would have violated this rule of action.

4. *He answered and said.* No proof is furnished by these words of the bodily presence of Satan. Nothing is more common than to employ words denoting a vocal utterance, when a person, in a highly excited state of feeling, or in a process of deep thought, is communing with himself. Compare 9:3, 21; Luke 12:45; Rom. 10:6; Eph. 5:19. It is of common occurrence also in Homer, and other ancient and profane writings. This mode of expression imparts life and vivacity to the narration. *It is written.* The

6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down, for it is written, 'He shall

*e* Ps. 91:11, 12.

quotation is from Deut. 8:3, where the expression *word*, in the sense of *thing*, is supplied by our translators, on the authority probably of this quotation. "Every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God," means every thing which God has appointed for food, or every arrangement by which man's wants are to be supplied. God has other ways and means of preserving life than by mere bread. That is an important article of food, but life is not dependent upon it, but rather upon the whole economy of God's plan, which may render it proper to feed his people on manna for years, in order to teach them their dependence upon Him, and that from his storehouse they are to look for the supply of their daily wants. The quotation as thus explained, was a most apt reply to the wicked suggestion of Satan. It also contains a sentiment of universal application; that we are to receive from God's hand our common food with thankfulness, and not resort to ways of our own, in hopes of improving the divinely appointed means of our subsistence. *Man*; literally, *the man*, the article imparting to the word a generic signification, *all mankind, man*.

5, 6. The second temptation, which Luke places in the order of third, claims a brief consideration of its manner of presentation, and then of its nature. In taking Christ to the holy city, we are not to suppose that Satan transported him through the air, or coerced him to go against his will. In the transfiguration, our Lord is said to have *taken* Peter, and James, and John, and *brought* them up into a high mountain, but this does not imply that he took them thither miraculously or by force. So also in going to Jerusalem (20:17), he *took* the twelve disciples apart, &c. Nothing is meant by this expression beyond the ordinary influence, which one person has over an-

give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any

time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7 Jesus said unto him, It is

other. Jesus went to the temple at the suggestion of Satan. There was no sin in that. Thousands of Jews resorted daily to the battlements, to walk and enjoy the prospect and the invigorating breeze. This was no part of the temptation, nor did Satan regard it as such. It was only preliminary to it, as the fact that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, was preliminary to the great object for which he went there, *to be tempted of the devil*. His going to Jerusalem at the suggestion of the tempter, to vary the temptation, and give it the point and power, which we shall see in the sequel it had, was no more sinful than his previous going up into the wilderness for the very purpose of being tempted. It formed a part of the divine plan that he should be tempted, and that Satan should select the place and manner of temptation. We must admit this, or give up our defence of the whole transaction. He went to work and placed before our Savior inducements to sin, precisely as he would before any human being, although with a degree of skill, adroitness, and perseverance, which showed his estimate of the mighty prize for which he was contending. It was to avoid this objection, which we see to have no force, that a voluntary going to Jerusalem at the suggestion of the tempter, seemed to imply a sinful acquiescence to his will on the part of Christ, that so many commentators have explained the word *taketh*, as denoting physical coercion, not reflecting that the difficulty, which they thus seek to remove, lies not more in the way of our Lord's going to the holy city, than his previous going up into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

In what did this second temptation consist? It must have been something more than to merely test God's providential care of his Son, for that could have been made from any rocky ledge or cliff of the desert, to leap from which

would be self-destruction. It could not refer to a presumptive trial of his own self-sustaining power, inasmuch as the Scripture quoted by the devil, would then have been inapposite. It was not a vain display of the care of his Heavenly Father which was urged upon him by the tempter. It must then be referred to some proof of his Messiahship, different from that which God intended. Before him, on the one hand, were toil, privation, suffering, and death. The nation was to reject his claim, and treat him as an impostor. His divine mission would be acknowledged by only a few obscure and unlettered men. On the other hand, he might be revealed at once, as the kingly, conquering Messiah, so long expected and earnestly desired by the nation. Descending unhurt from the dizzy height on which he stood, he would be received with acclamation by the multitude below, and hailed at once as their Messiah. The notion entertained by the Jews, that this personage was to remain during his early years in some retired place, and at the proper age to come, as it were, by some miraculous descent from the air, together with God's promise, that the angels were to have him in charge, and bear him up on just such an emergency as this, at the suggestion of the tempter, passed through his mind, and constituted a strong temptation to do the thing proposed. But he instantly spurns the temptation, and by another apt quotation from Scripture, silenced the adversary, and cut him off from every hope of success in this insidious appeal to his ambition of earthly honor and applause. *The holy city*, i. e. Jerusalem, where was the temple and the seat of religion. *A pinnacle*. This refers to the central porch, or Herod's royal portico, on the south side of the temple, impending over the valley of Jehoshaphat, which was 500 cubits below. Josephus (*Antiq.* xv. 11, § 5) says, that if any one looked down from



written again, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high moun-

*De. 6: 16.*

the top of this battlement, "he would be giddy, while his sight could not reach to such an immense depth." *For it is written.* This quotation is from Ps. 91: 11, the words in the original, "to keep thee in all thy ways," being omitted by Matthew, and partially so by Luke.

7. The reply of our Lord is quoted from Deut. 6: 16, and is introduced by the word *again*, because it was not opposed to that cited by Satan, but limited, qualified, and explained. *Thou shalt not tempt.* The word *tempt* here signifies to *put to the proof, to test, try, &c.* see N. on v. 1. It would be a sinful trial of God's promised care and protection, to rush into danger, either for one's private ends and purposes, or to make trial of His fidelity to his promises.

8, 9. The general principles, which have guided us in our investigation of the first and second temptations, are also applicable to the third. In the same way by the suggestion of the tempter, he was taken up into an exceeding high mountain, where he was shown all the kingdoms of the world. The best commentators are agreed, that no miracle was here wrought, or illusion practised upon the vision of Jesus, but that he was shown the tetrarchies of Palestine, and some of the countries bordering on the Mediterranean. There is a difference, however, in the mode of explanation, by which this sense of the passage is obtained. Some take the word *world*, in the restricted sense which it has in Luke 2: 1; Rom. 1: 8; 4: 13. But as it generally refers to the *universe, world, earth*, in the most enlarged sense, it is better to regard it as used here hyperbolically. Some seek to shun the difficulty, by supposing that in imagination the whole world lay at the feet of Jesus. But there was no necessity of ascend-

tain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9 And saith unto him, All

ing an exceeding high mountain, to enable the imagination to encircle the whole earth. The temptation was indeed addressed to the mind, but in view of the panorama of countries, which the eye of Jesus could take in at a glance. These portions of Palestine were called *kingdoms*, because they were governed by ethnarchs with *kingly* power. *The glory of them*, i. e. their wealth, resources, and power. *All these things will I give thee.* In this lay the temptation. His allegiance to Satan was to be rewarded with temporal power. To us who look upon the Redeemer as God-man, the Lord of heaven and earth, this temptation would seem to be ill adapted to entice him to sin. But we must not forget that he had a nature like ours, susceptible of like emotions, and that it was to this nature that these temptations were addressed. It is another question, which cannot be satisfactorily answered, to what extent Satan was acquainted with the complex nature of Jesus. It is enough to know that he regarded him as capable of being tempted, and that he "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." *Fall down and worship me.* This does not refer to bodily prostration, which would have been repulsive in its very nature, but to obedience, vassalage, of which bodily homage is the symbol.

10. Jesus, with a holy indignation at these repeated assaults of Satan upon his integrity, now commands the tempter to be gone. *Get thee behind me, Satan*, i. e. begone, away. Luke says that "when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season." He was once more to return (John 14: 30), not so much to assail our Lord with new temptations, as to distress him as far as he had power, and to stir up against him the rage and

these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, <sup>9</sup>Thou shalt worship the

*9* De. 6: 13, & 10: 20; Jos. 24: 14; 1 Sa. 7: 3.

malice of wicked men. *Satan*, a word of Hebrew origin, signifying *an adversary*. In the New Testament, *the adversary, the devil. Thou shalt worship, &c.* The collocation of the words in the original is more emphatic: *The Lord thy God shalt thou worship.* The quotation is from Deut. 6: 16, in which the homage asked by Satan for himself, is declared to belong only to God. The future tense is here expressive of obligation, a sense which it not unfrequently has. See Rom. 6: 15; 1 Cor. 11: 22.

11. *Angels came and ministered unto him.* These conflicts with the adversary, together with his long fast, must have reduced our Savior to great physical weakness. But angels were now sent to minister unto him. With what rapture must he have hailed the presence of those glorious beings, sent by his Father to sustain and comfort him. Thus God often manifests his loving kindness unto his people, by granting them the clearest tokens of his presence and love, when brought out of the furnace of affliction, in which he has seen fit to try them.

12. A considerable interval of time is here passed over by Matthew, in which our Lord, after calling Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael, went forth into Galilee (John 1: 40-51), was present at the marriage in Cana (John 2: 12), attended the passover at Jerusalem, and drove the traders from the temple (John 2: 13-17), discoursed with Nicodemus (John 3: 1-12), remained in Judea, and baptized by his disciples (John 3: 22), and after a while returned to Galilee, on hearing that John had been cast into prison. This journey into Galilee is the one here referred to by Matthew, and in the parallel passages

Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11 Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, <sup>h</sup>angels came and ministered unto him.

12 ¶ Now when Jesus had

*h* He. 1: 14.

*i* Ma. 1: 14; Lu. 3: 20, & 4: 14, 31; Jn. 4: 43.

in Mark 1: 14, and Luke 4: 14. The imprisonment of John by Herod, rendered it necessary for him to visit Galilee, in order that the work of reformation might not cease through want of laborers. He wished, perhaps, also, to take advantage of any sympathetic excitement in John's favor, by the unjust persecution of Herod. The jealousy of the Pharisees in respect to the success of Christ's ministry in Judea, may also in part have been the cause of his departure from that region (see John 4: 1-3). On his way to Galilee, he passed through Samaria, and held his discourse with the woman of that city (John 4: 4-42), and thence proceeded to Cana, of Galilee, where he healed at a word the nobleman's son, lying sick at Capernaum (John 4: 46-54). From this place he went to Nazareth (Luke 4: 16-31), at which point in the history, Matthew takes up the narration. It is highly necessary, to a right understanding of many incidents in our Lord's history, that we get a clear and connected view of his journeyings, and the order of events in his ministry.

13. *And leaving Nazareth.* In Luke 4: 16-31, we are informed of the circumstances of his visit to Nazareth, and his rejection by his fellow townsmen. Alford, however, thinks that this visit to Nazareth took place some time previous to that which is referred to in Luke. But there is an abrupt chasm in Matthew, which can be filled by nothing better than Luke's account as above referred to, and the internal evidence is therefore very clear, that the same visit is referred to by both evangelists. *And dwelt in Capernaum.* This city of Galilee was situated on the western shore of Lake Tiberias, on the borders of Zebulon and Naphtali.

heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee ;

13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea-coast, in the borders of Zebulon and Nephthalim :

14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

|| Or, *delivered up*.

Jesus made it the principal place of his residence, after he was driven from Nazareth. Hence it is sometimes called his own city (9 : 1). *Upon the sea-coast*. The lake of Tiberias was called also the sea of Galilee. *In the borders of Zebulon and Nephthalim*. In the original division of the land by Joshua, the lot of these two tribes fell on the western and north-western borders of this lake. The slight difference in orthography between these and some other proper names in the Old and New Testaments, results from their difference of sound in the Hebrew and Greek, by which, in transferring them from one language to the other, the orthography would be made to conform with the word as spoken.

14-16. *That it might be fulfilled, &c.* See N. on 1 : 22. The quotation in vs. 15, 16 is made from Isa. 9 : 1, 2. By recurring to the original prophecy, it will be seen that after a reference to the desolation brought upon the land by its idolatry, there is a promise of future deliverance. The common translation does not quite give the meaning of the original, which is this : " But the gloom shall not [always] be so oppressive as when the former time (i. e. the time of the Assyrian invasion) poured contempt upon the land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali ; for the latter time shall honor the sea-coast (i. e. the country) beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. The people that walk in darkness shall see a great light ; on those who live in the valley of death-shade, light shall brightly shine." In

15 <sup>1</sup>The land of Zebulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles ;

16 <sup>1</sup>The people which sat in darkness, saw great light ; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

17 <sup>m</sup>From that time Jesus be-

<sup>k</sup> Is. 9 : 1, 2. <sup>l</sup> Is. 42 : 7 ; Lu. 2 : 32.  
<sup>m</sup> Ma. 1 : 14, 15.

our Savior's appearance in Galilee, and his selection of that region as the chief theatre of his ministry, this prophecy of Isaias had a remarkable fulfillment. *Way of the sea*, i. e. the country around the lake, or along the way by the lake. *Galilee of the Gentiles*, so called from its mixed population of Jews and Gentiles, was the northern portion of Galilee, the inhabitants of which were exceedingly debased and ignorant. They might well be said to sit in great darkness. The expression *beyond Jordan*, does not necessarily mean here the eastern side of Jordan, but the northern portions of the land, near and about the sources of the Jordan. *Shadow of death* is put here figuratively for *deepest gloom, thickest darkness*, like that in Hades, the abode of the dead. Moral darkness is of course referred to, and hence the antithetic expression, *great light*, denotes the moral illumination caused by the appearance and preachings of Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world (John 1 : 9 ; 8 : 12). *Has sprung up*. Has arisen like the sun or one of the heavenly bodies in the east.

17. *From that time, &c.* Some explain this as a retrospective or recapitulatory remark, referring, a little out of its natural order, to the departure of Jesus to Galilee, spoken of in v. 12. But it is perhaps better to refer it to the time of his expulsion from Nazareth, and settlement at Capernaum. He had before this time preached, but not in so public and continuous a manner as afterwards. His ministry in Galilee may be dated from this, as the time of its



gan to preach, and to say, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

18 ¶ And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon <sup>r</sup>called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

19 And he saith unto them,

*p* John 1:42.

real commencement. *For the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* See N. on 3:2. Jesus had now begun to lay the foundation of his new kingdom, yet it was not fully established until he rose from the dead and was constituted King in Zion (Ps. 2:6). In Mark (1:15) the words "believe the gospel," which John's preaching could not embrace, are added. Jesus Christ was the first messenger of "good tidings" to man, the prophets and religious teachers of former times, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off (Heb. 11:13), and preached forgiveness through faith in Him who was yet to come.

18-22. CALLING OF PETER, ANDREW, JAMES AND JOHN. Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:6-11.

18. *And Jesus walked, &c.* This refers to his passing from place to place, in the exercise of his ministry. According to Luke (5:1-11), the people so pressed upon him to hear the word of God, that he was obliged to enter a fisherman's boat, and shove a little from land, in order to be able to address the thronging and eager multitude. After his address was ended, he directed Simon, the owner of the boat, to launch out into the deep and let down his nets for a draught. It was on the occasion of this miraculous draught of fishes, that Simon with his brother Andrew, and James and John, his partners, at the call of Jesus, forsook their employment and followed him as disciples. It will be seen, by a comparison with Luke, that there is no essential difference in the statements of the Evangelists. Luke gives a full account of the circumstances attending the call of these apostles, while Matthew and Mark confine their narration to the call itself. *Sea of Galilee.* See N. on v. 13. Luke (5:1) calls it the lake of

Gennesaret, which was its most ancient name (see Numb. 34:11), given it from the small territory of the same name on its western borders, the chief town of which was a fenced city (Josh. 19:35). *Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother.* While in attendance upon John's ministry, these two brethren had already enjoyed an interview with Jesus, at which time Simon received from him the name *Cephas*, a Hebrew word signifying a rock or stone, to which *Peter* is the corresponding Greek name. After this brief interview, they seem to have returned to Galilee, and remained with him as his disciples (1 John 2:2, 11, 12), but probably did not accompany him to Jerusalem on the occasion of his first passover (John 2:13). Doddridge, however, thinks that they accompanied him, but that from prudential motives, arising from the jealousy of the Pharisees (John 4:1), and Herod's persecuting spirit (v. 12), he had thought proper to dismiss them for a time, probably while he tarried two days with the Samaritans (John 4:40). Whatever view we take, they had evidently returned to their former employment, until this new and special call, after which they remained in constant attendance upon the instructions of Jesus. *For they were fishers.* The lake of Gennesaret was famed for the purity of its water and the abundance and fine flavor of its fish. Its length from north to south is about twelve miles, and its breadth from five to seven miles. Lieut. Lynch reports its greatest ascertained depth at 165 feet. Its capacity was therefore sufficient to supply the neighboring towns and villages with fish, and to furnish constant employment to many, who pursued the fisherman's calling for a livelihood.

19. *Follow me, i. e. become my disciples.* Instruction in ancient times

Follow me, and <sup>9</sup> I will make you fishers of men.

20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

21 ¶ And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his

*q* Lu. 5:10, 11. *r* Ma. 10:28; Lu. 18:28.

was often given while the teacher and his disciples were walking about. In such cases the former walked a little in advance of the latter, which gave rise to the phrase *follow me*, as indicative of a call to discipleship. *Fishers of men*. In Luke (5:10), *thou* (i. e. Simon) *shalt catch men*. Little did they understand, at that time, the full import of this expression. In subsequent times, while preaching the gospel, they doubtless recurred to it, and saw its pertinency and force.

20. *And they straightway left their nets*. A beautiful instance of promptitude in obeying Jesus. Their nets, which had hitherto been the means of their livelihood, were left to rot on the sand. The abundance of fish, which the miraculous draught had given them, remained unsold. They only brought their ship to land, and then forsaking all followed at his command their Lord, and with a fidelity and constancy never surpassed, remained true to him, amidst persecutions, reproaches, imprisonments, and death itself.

21, 22. After rendering assistance to their companions in securing the miraculous draught of fishes, it seems that James and John returned to their own station or place of anchorage, and were engaged in mending their nets, which some think had been broken in the great draught. But as we have no evidence that any net, save that of Peter, was let down for the draught, it is better to refer this to the usual wear and tear of the nets, which would require some attention each day. Jesus, as he proceeded a little distance from Simon's ship, finds these brethren with their father Zebedee in this employ-

ment, and calls them, quite likely, in terms similar to those which he addressed to Peter. With a like spirit of prompt and cheerful obedience, they left the ship with their father and hired servants (Mark 1:20), and followed him.

22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

23 ¶ And Jesus went about all

*s* Ma. 1:19, 20; Lu. 5:10.

ment, and calls them, quite likely, in terms similar to those which he addressed to Peter. With a like spirit of prompt and cheerful obedience, they left the ship with their father and hired servants (Mark 1:20), and followed him.

23-25. JESUS MAKES A CIRCUIT IN GALILEE.

23. *And Jesus went about, &c.* In order to keep the thread of the narrative unbroken, we must turn to Mark and Luke, for one or two incidents, the particular mention of which Matthew has passed over. One of these is the healing of the demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-37). Another is the cure of Peter's wife's mother in the same city, which Matthew out of its proper order has narrated in 8:14-17. In general it may be remarked, that the order of Mark and John approaches the nearest to that which is strictly chronological, and therefore these writers harmonize in the main with each other. *Teaching in their synagogues*. The pronoun *their* refers to the inhabitants implied in the word *Galilee*. A similar construction is found in 9:35; Luke 4:15, &c.

In the time of Christ, there was no official person, who answered to the synagogue-preacher of more modern times. Any one might read the section of Scripture, or address the people, if respectable for learning and readiness of speech. Our Lord availed himself of this common privilege, to instruct the people in things pertaining to the kingdom which he was establishing. As it respects the synagogues, they seem to have had their origin in the Babylonish captivity, when it be-

Galilee, 'teaching in their synagogues, and preaching "the gospel of the kingdom, "and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people.

t Ch. 9: 35; Ma. 1: 21, 39; Lu. 4: 15, 44.

came necessary to have places of meeting, and persons to teach from the sacred books, in order to perpetuate the worship of Jehovah. The synagogues, in the time of our Savior, were all built with a court and porches. In the centre of the court was a chapel supported by four columns, in which on an elevation was placed the book of the law. The uppermost seats in the synagogue deemed especially honorable, were those nearest the chapel (23: 6; James 2: 3). *Gospel of the kingdom*, i. e. glad tidings respecting the kingdom of the Messiah. At first our Lord did not openly claim to be the Christ, but prepared the way for this, by rectifying the erroneous views entertained in respect to the character and mission of that personage. In the light of his exposition of the Messianic prophecies, the people, by comparing his character and acts with those of the Messiah as foretold in the Scriptures, would themselves arrive at the conclusion, that he could be none other than the person predicted and so long expected (see 11: 2-6). The spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, its blessings and privileges, its diffusive and moulding influence, its final triumph, glory and perpetuity, were themes doubtless on which our Savior descanted, in these synagogue services in which he took part. *All manner of sickness*, &c. The word translated *sickness* refers to fevers, inflammatory, diseases, and maladies of that kind. The word *disease* relates to that class of complaints which produce weakness or general debility.

24. *His fame*. The rumor or report of his wondrous works. *All Syria*. Not simply the region bordering on Palestine, but the whole country bearing that name. *Divers diseases*. Various kinds of diseases, all sorts of sicknesses. *Torments*. Reference is here had to

24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which

u Ch. 21: 14; Ma. 1: 14. w Ma. 1: 34.

those violent and incurable diseases and torturing maladies, with which men are sometimes afflicted. *Were possessed with devils* or demons. The word *demon*, in the original Greek, means, 1. Any being of the invisible world, either good or bad, any deity or god; 2. divinity; 3. deified fate, fortune, either good or bad; 4. souls of departed heroes, permitted to return to earth and exert an influence either good or bad upon men; 5. fate, fortune, chance; 6. any spirit or ghost. The New Testament writers, in selecting from the Greek language a word to denote spirits, subordinate to Satan, in the sense attached to demon, could find no other or better word to employ than this. As they used *theos*, which by the Greeks was applied to a god or deity of any sort, of Jehovah alone the supreme Lord of all, so they used the word *demon* in the restricted sense of an adverse or evil spirit. If they wished to express this notion of an evil spirit, and who, without begging the question, can deny this, they had no other word in the Greek language which they could so appropriately use for this purpose. *Theos* was already employed to designate the true God. The word *diabolos*, *devil*, is the corresponding Greek word for the Hebrew *satan*, and was used in the New Testament of the prince of the fallen spirits. *Angel*, from the Greek *angelos*, denotes the good spirits who are messengers and ministers of Jehovah. There was no word left but *demon*, or *demonion*, to denote the inferior evil spirits. Farmer and others, who deny the existence of demons and demoniacal influences, start with the false assumption that this word in Greek is never applied to inferior deities, as fallen angels, but to the spirits of such as had once been men and who, being advanced to the

were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and

those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

rank of gods and demi-gods, had the power of entering the bodies of men, and producing frenzy or distraction. But not to say that his definition of *demon* is incorrect, if it were true, it would furnish no more proof against the sense in which it is manifestly used by the New Testament writers, than the acknowledged fact that *theos* has no such use in the Greek language, as it has in the New Testament, in its application to the Supreme Jehovah. Both words are employed in a restricted and modified sense, in the sacred use to which they have been transferred by the New Testament writers. The idea, therefore, that the evangelists employed this word in accordance with the superstition of the times, to denote a violent disease, caused by the supposed possession of some departed human spirit, is not only based on an erroneous definition of *demon*, but by a parity of reasoning would prove that in the use of *theos*, they must have attached to it the low signification which it had as originally used by the idolatrous Greeks.

We claim, then, that the evangelists used the word *demon*, and had a right so to do, from its generic signification in Greek, in the sense of veritable evil spirits, fallen angels, who, for wise reasons, had permission to enter the bodies of many persons in the time of Christ. That these were not natural diseases merely, the cure of which constituted all the casting out or ejection of demons there was in the case, is almost too evident to demand proof. What kind of disease is that which cries out, "what have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us (i. e. the sickness or disease) before the time?" (8: 29). Who ever heard of a disorder that begged permission to enter, and actually did enter swine, causing the immediate destruction of 2,000 of these animals? How was it that the miserable creatures, possessed by these remarkable diseases, were so much in advance of those in the enjoyment of health and

a sound mind, as to recognize Jesus as the "Son of God," and "Son of David?" The idea that these demons were only the personifications of violent diseases and frenzy, is too preposterous for one moment's belief.

This is a subject which pertains not to the province of reason, but only to revelation. We may argue the existence of a Great First Cause, from the evidence furnished us by our senses. "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." Rom. 1: 20. Not so of intermediate beings. The knowledge of their existence comes to us from revelation only. What then do the Scriptures teach respecting them? No one denies that the existence of good spirits, angels, messengers of Jehovah, is clearly revealed in the Bible. Why shall we not take with equal readiness of assent, its teachings respecting the existence of bad spirits, demons, devils? If good angels are employed by our Creator in missions of benevolence to man, why may we not suppose an opposite agency in which evil spirits are employed? If so, may not this agency be physical as well as moral? There is nothing to forbid this. But the proof is to be looked for wholly in revelation, and there we conceive it to be ample and clear on this point. The agency of Satan in afflicting Job, of which we should have been wholly ignorant, had it not been revealed to us—the delivering of an erring man to Satan, at Paul's direction, for the destruction of the flesh, that his soul might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5: 5)—the words of Peter respecting Christ's healing "all that were oppressed of the devil" (Acts 10: 38)—and what our Lord himself said (Luke 13: 16), "ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years," &c. all show that a physical agency is exerted by evil spirits upon men. This



25 <sup>y</sup> And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan.

*y* Ma. 3:7.

receives accumulative proof from the demoniacal influence exerted upon the bodies of so many in the time of our Savior. Their physical agency is indeed restricted within proper bounds and limits. Satan could do no more to Job, in the trial of his integrity, than he was permitted to do. But that such a physical influence, to a greater or less extent, is exerted by evil spirits, no one who reads and believes the Bible can deny.

The question may be asked, why there were so many demoniacal possessions in the time of Christ, and none now? To answer the latter part of the inquiry first, how do we know that demons are not, at the present time, exerting their fell influence upon the physical condition of men? Why may not those strange and violent maladies, which we sometimes witness, be legitimately attributed to their agency? The knowledge of this does not fall within the province of our senses, and we can only, therefore, indulge in a conjecture of its truth. But whether it be so or not, our ignorance on the subject renders any argument drawn therefrom, either for or against the existence of demoniacal agency in Christ's time, of no force. To the inquiry, why so many were possessed with evil spirits in his day, the same answer may be given, as to the question why Pharaoh was raised up, "that God might show his power in him, and that his name might be declared in all the earth." Rom. 9:17. It was to show forth the power of our Savior in destroying the works of the devil, and to illustrate and attest his divine mission.

*Lunatics*; literally, *moon-struck* persons. These persons were afflicted with epilepsy or insanity, the symptoms of which were supposed to become more aggravated by the increasing

## CHAPTER V.

AND seeing the multitudes, <sup>a</sup> he went up into a mountain, and when he was set, his disciples came unto him.

*a* Ma. 3:13, 20.

moon. As these persons were not really moon-struck, an argument is sought from this against the reality of the demoniacal possessions in the former phrase. But the cases are widely different. It is one thing to erroneously attribute a disease to some agency of nature, and affix to it a name which shall remain long after the error has been exploded, as in our use of the word *lunatic*, and quite another, to call a man *demon-possessed*, when we have the sure word of revelation, that he was really thus possessed. The word of God is true, and to be taken without distrust or hesitation, even on points to us wholly mysterious. When it affirms a thing, we are to bow with submission to its authority, and leave the mystery, if there be one, to be solved in the mighty future, when we shall be in the more immediate presence of God, and the "parts of his ways" shall be successively made known unto us, according to his good pleasure toward us in Christ Jesus. *Had the palsy*. They had a paralysis of the body in whole or part. This disease is so common as to need no explanation. *He healed them*. An instantaneous cure of all these varied and malignant diseases, could have been effected by nothing short of a miraculous agency.

25. *There followed him, &c.* Some accompanied him from place to place to enjoy his instruction, others, doubtless, to gratify their curiosity in witnessing his wonderful works. *Decapolis* (literally, *Ten cities*), a district lying principally east of Jordan and south of the lake of Tiberias. It embraced, as its name imports, ten cities, one of which, Scythopolis, was on the west side of the Jordan. *Beyond Jordan*, i. e. Perea, embracing the country east of Jordan, between the rivers Jabbok and Arnon.



## CHAPTERS V.—VII.

## PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

These chapters contain Christ's discourse to his disciples, entitled THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. The time of his ministry when it was delivered, is to be ascertained by the settlement of a previous question, whether it refers to the same discourse given in part by Luke, 6 : 20—49. The arguments in favor of this are quite conclusive, and are thus given by Dr. Robinson in his Harmony of the Gospels : "1. The choice of the Twelve by our Lord, as his ministers and witnesses, furnished an appropriate occasion for this public declaration respecting the spiritual nature of his kingdom, and the life and character required of those who would become his true followers. Luke expressly assigns this as the occasion ; and although Matthew is silent here and elsewhere as to the selection of the apostles, yet some passages of the discourse, as reported by him, seem to presuppose their previous appointment as teachers (see Matt. 5 : 13, 14 ; 7 : 6). 2. The beginning and the end of both discourses, and the general course of thought in both, exhibit an entire accordance one with the other. 3. The historical circumstances which follow both discourses are the same, viz. the entrance into Capernaum and the healing of the Centurion's servant."

No valid objection can be made against the identity of these two discourses, from the fact that Luke has reported only portions of what Matthew has given in full. The Evangelists were independent writers. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they exercised their own judgment, in respect to the selection and order of detail in the life and discourses of our Savior. The circumstances in which Matthew wrote, addressed as his gospel was primarily to Hebrew Christians, seemed to render it in his judgment desirable, that a discourse which brought out so clearly the spirituality of the Mosaic law, and its claims upon

the obedience of the heart, should be fully related. Luke, on the contrary, writing for Gentile Christians, who had no concern with the Mosaic ritual, brought to view only those portions of the discourse, which referred to general duties, as love to enemies, freedom from censoriousness in judging others, and the like. This will also account for some slight additions in Luke, to what is found in the sermon, as given by Matthew.

If it may then be assumed as a fact, that these discourses are identical, we must obviously follow the order of Luke, for reasons which appear in the foregoing quotation from Dr. Robinson. The Savior had healed the leper (8 : 2—4), the paralytic (9 : 2—8), called Matthew (9 : 9), kept his second pass-over, at Jerusalem (John 5 : 1—47), defended his disciples for plucking the ears of grain on the Sabbath (12 : 1—8), healed the withered hand (12 : 9—14), was followed by multitudes at the sea of Tiberias (12 : 15—21), chose the Twelve (10 : 2—4). This last act was performed upon a mountain or hill, upon which he had spent the whole of the previous night in prayer (Luke 6 : 12). After he had chosen the Twelve, he descended with them into the plain, and there healed many from among the great multitude, that had gathered together from all quarters awaiting his descent from the mountain. As they thronged around him and pressed forward in order to touch him (Luke 6 : 19), he probably ascended some eminence near at hand, where, as upon a kind of elevated pulpit, he sat according to the custom of those times, and addressed his disciples in the hearing of the multitude.

Having thus referred briefly to the order of events and the circumstances attending the delivery of this wonderful discourse, it seems necessary to the right understanding of it, to consider the sermon itself before taking up the parts in detail. The occasion on which it was delivered justifies us in regarding it as a *consecration sermon*, on the choosing of the Twelve to the office of apostleship. It was particularly addressed

to them, and on the very day in which they had been called to that office. It was the first of a series of discourses, lectures, or conversations, by which the minds of his disciples were gradually freed from the prejudices, errors, and false interpretations of the Mosaic law, so universally prevalent at that time. The spirituality of that law, into the interior of which they had scarcely been able to look, in consequence of the cumbrous forms and ceremonies, which vain traditions had heaped upon it, our Lord, in his very first discourse after calling them to the apostolical office, brought out in all its purity and binding obligation. Outward observance of the law, unless attended with the obedience of the heart, internal purity, and love toward all men, was declared to be utterly worthless—a Pharisæical robe of righteousness, which gave no claim to the kingdom of heaven. The impossibility of keeping a law of such spirituality, and wide dominion over every moral act and emotion, was brought home to each heart by this discourse, with a pungency, which must have wrung from many an auditor in the recesses of his own mind, the inquiry, *what shall I do to be saved?* They were taught the first lesson, which must be learned by all who go to Christ for salvation, viz. the worthlessness, in the sight of God, of their own personal righteousness. This would be followed naturally by the second step in the process of finding Christ, a perception of the infinite need of just such a Savior as is provided in the gospel. How adapted then was this discourse to prepare the way for a true view of the object of the Messiah's advent, and the nature of his kingdom. What light broke in upon their mind, with such a presentation of the nature and extent of the divine law.

The question is not unfrequently asked, why the atonement, justification, sanctification, and other leading doctrines of grace, found no place in the Sermon on the Mount. The remarks already made furnish an answer to this question. The minds of his auditors

were not yet prepared to receive these truths. Notwithstanding all the instructions of their Master, the apostles, previous to his death, had very imperfect views of redemption through his blood. The idea of a temporal kingdom, to the high offices of which we often find them aspiring, seemed to have gotten such possession of their minds, that it was not fully removed, until the promised descent of the Spirit after our Lord's ascension. Christ expressly said that he had many things to say to them, which they could not then bear, but that when the Spirit of truth was come, he would guide them into all truth (John 16 : 12, 13). A gradual removal of error, and induction into correct views of his mission and kingdom, was evidently the course adopted by Jesus in teaching his disciples, and with the wisdom of this we have no reason to find fault.

But why did he not preach so all-important a doctrine, as the necessity of regeneration? He did do this, and with tremendous effect. Who could have listened to his exposition of the spirituality and extent of the divine law, and not felt in his very heart of hearts, that he needed a new moral nature; that his depravity was so deep and permanent, his soul so polluted, his heart so vile, that unless he was renewed, he could never expect the favor of God. The doctrine of the new birth might not have been apprehended, in its technical or theological aspects, by them as by us now, but in all its essential features, it was forced upon their attention, by the revelation made to them of the spirituality and claims of God's law.

#### CHAPTER V.

1. *The multitudes* who awaited his descent from the mountain, whither he had retired to pray, and to choose the Twelve (see Luke 6 : 17). *A mountain*; literally, *the mountain*, i. e. some eminence belonging to the mountain from which he had just descended. *And when he was set*. This was the usual posture in which instruction was given. *His disciples*. The apostles and others

2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

3 <sup>b</sup> Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>b</sup> Lu. 6: 20. See Ps. 51: 17; Pr. 16: 19, & 29: 23; Is. 57: 15; & 66: 2.

who had attached themselves to his ministry. *Came unto him.* Drew near to receive instruction. They formed the innermost circle, as the privileged friends of Jesus, and as the persons directly to be addressed.

2. *He opened his mouth, &c.* This is not a pleonasm, but a form of expression designed to show the solemnity and importance of the subject. *Taught them,* i. e. his disciples.

3. *Blessed are the poor in spirit.* How strangely must these words, so different from the instructions of the scribes and Pharisees, have fallen upon their ears. Some translate: *blessed in spirit* (i. e. in temper or disposition) *are the poor.* This is evidently erroneous. Lowliness and meekness of spirit is that which our Lord pronounces blessed, and this he does, because such persons feel their need of the gospel, and are ready to embrace its requisitions. The idea of the Romanists and some of the early reformers, that physical or external poverty is meant by the word *poor*, because in Luke the words *in spirit* are omitted, is rendered untenable by the evident spirituality of the promise both in Luke and Matthew, which of itself indicates the spirituality of that to which the beatitude refers. *For theirs is the kingdom of heaven,* i. e. such a temper as is here implied in *poor in spirit*, is the temper and spirit of those who are to possess the blessings of the Messiah's reign. The phrase, "Kingdom of heaven," has here its widest signification, viz. its blessings and privileges on earth, and eternal felicity in the world to come. See N. on 3: 2.

4. *Blessed are they that mourn.* It would come far short of the true meaning, to refer this to mere worldly sorrow or external suffering, arising from the political oppression of the Jews at that

4 <sup>c</sup> Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5 <sup>d</sup> Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

<sup>c</sup> Is. 61: 2, 3; Lu. 6: 21; Jn. 16: 20; 2 Co. 1: 7; Re. 21: 4. <sup>d</sup> Ps. 37: 11. <sup>e</sup> See Ro. 4: 13.

period, or even that which a conversion to Christianity brought with it in times of persecution, which latter was Augustine's interpretation. Luther refers it to patient endurance as an element of religious character. Earthly afflictions, as leading to higher attainments in holiness, may be included in the mourning here spoken of. But it evidently refers primarily, if not exclusively, to spiritual sorrow, in view of the feelings of a corrupt sinful nature. A mourning spirit is nearly allied to one that feels its impoverished condition, and hence this beatitude follows very naturally the preceding one. *For they shall be comforted,* i. e. the causes of their grief shall be removed, and springs of comfort shall be opened unto them. This beatitude is often verified in the experience of God's children here on earth, but its full import will not be realized, until the mourning soul enjoys the rest and blessedness of heaven.

5. *The meek.* Those who are mild and gentle, who can bear trials and contradictions without betraying a petulant and resentful spirit. It was a characteristic of our Savior, that when he was reviled, he reviled not again (1 Pet. 2: 23). They are blessed, who imitate his patience and gentleness under injuries and provocations. It must be remembered that the very opposite states of mind and heart to those here inculcated by Christ, were strikingly characteristic of the whole Jewish nation at that time. They were a people of a quick, fiery temper, which was goaded to more than its natural violence, by the intolerable oppressions and insults heaped upon them by the Romans. They supposed, also, that under the Messiah's reign, a bold, martial spirit would be the passport to

6 Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: *for* they shall be filled.

*f* Is. 55:1, & 65:13. *g* Ps. 41:1; Ch. 6:14;

honor and distinction. But our Lord here tells them that meekness, patience, gentleness, are the qualities of heart which must be possessed by those who would attain to eminence and bliss in his kingdom. *Shall inherit the earth* (i. e. land). This language is founded upon the strong feeling, with which the ancient Israelites looked forward to Canaan as the land of promise. As this was to be the place of rest, after their wanderings in the wilderness, it became a type of a higher, spiritual, enduring rest in heaven. See Heb. 4:8. Thus as there was a temporal and spiritual rest, so also the land of promise, the earthly Canaan, indicated besides a temporal inheritance, one also which was spiritual, heavenly. This heavenly possession, of which the promised land of Canaan was a type, was declared by our Savior to belong to those of a meek and lowly disposition. How strange this must have appeared to those, who were looking for earthly thrones and dignities under a temporal, conquering Messiah. Tholuck, in his effort to harmonize the views of those who refer this promise to an earthly good, with theirs who refer it to a heavenly inheritance, thinks that Christ's promise includes also, with the higher blessings, the triumph of the pious over their enemies in the present world. But a spiritual triumph, (and none other can be intended, since temporal power has thus far been generally in possession of the enemies of truth,) is essentially the same thing as the rewards and bliss of heaven, being a foretaste of the final victory, which is to be crowned with everlasting blessedness.

6. *Hunger and thirst after righteousness.* A strong metaphorical expression, showing the ardent longing of the truly pious soul after righteousness. By this latter expression is meant *piety towards God, vital religion, godliness.*

7 Blessed *are* the merciful: *for* they shall obtain mercy.

8 *Blessed are* the pure in

Ma. 11:25; 2 Ti. 1:16; He. 6:10; Ja. 2:13.  
*h* Ps. 15:2, & 24:4; He. 12:14.

The promise to such is that *they shall be filled.* The same figure is continued from the former clause. By a starving man nothing is accounted of any value, in comparison with that which will satisfy the cravings of hunger. How rich then and precious the promise to such, as are hungering and thirsting after righteousness, that their spiritual wants shall be supplied, and that they shall be filled with that for which they are so earnestly longing.

7. *The merciful.* Those who are actively compassionate. The mere passive quality of merey, inactive and inoperative, does not reach the full meaning of this passage. The translation might well be, *the actively benevolent,* not exclusively in alms-giving, although that is embraced in the sense, but generally in doing all in their power to promote the happiness and welfare of others. The highest type of this Christian virtue, is found in that spirit of self-consecration, which surrenders all to the cause of the Redeemer, and labors with unremitting zeal for the spiritual welfare of immortal souls. Such *shall obtain mercy.* They cared for the happiness of others, their own happiness shall be cared for by their Heavenly Father.

8. *The pure in heart.* This was opposed to the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees. They made clean the outside of the cup and platter, while their inward part was full of ravening and wickedness (Luke 11:39). But Christ demanded purity of heart, for when the heart is impure, the whole man is defiled (15:18). *They shall see God.* In Oriental courts, one of the highest favors conferred upon a subject, was to be admitted into the royal presence (1 Kings. 1:8; Prov. 22:29). *To see God* is then to be admitted into his favor, to enjoy communion with Him. But how can the morally unclean stand before Him, in whose



heart: for <sup>i</sup> they shall see God.

9 Blessed *are* the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God.

10 <sup>k</sup> Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

† 1 Co. 13: 12; 1 Jo. 3: 2, 3.      † 2 Co. 4: 17;  
2 Ti. 2: 12; 1 Pe. 3: 14.      † Lu. 6: 22.

eyes the heavens are impure? Of what use in the sight of Him who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of men, is a mere profession, an outside show of piety? "Create in me a clean heart, O God," should be the daily and earnest prayer of all who hope to see his face in peace.

9. *The peacemakers.* Reference is had here not only to those who strive to reconcile persons at variance, but to those, also, who are disposed to peace themselves. This was opposed to the notion entertained by the Jews, that they would be led by their Messiah, through a series of successful wars, to victory and dominion. Our Lord cuts them off from all such views of his mission, by pronouncing those blessed who are opposed to strife and contention. *Shall be called the children of God*, i. e. they shall be the objects of God's parental care; shall be like him in the possession of his peaceful, heavenly temper. See Luke 20: 36. Our Savior is styled, "Prince of peace" (Isa. 9: 6), and at his advent the heavenly choir proclaimed, "on earth peace, good will toward men." Luke 2: 14. The sons of peace are therefore true children of God, from their moral resemblance to him and his Son Jesus Christ.

10. *Persecuted for righteousness' sake.* The word *persecution* comes from a Greek word, signifying *to follow, chase, pursue*, and is used of the pursuit of enemies, wild beasts, game, &c. Hence it came naturally to signify in a secondary sense, *to pursue with evil intent, to vex, harass, destroy*, &c. It does not so much refer to a single act, as a series

11 Blessed are ye when *men* shall <sup>l</sup> revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of <sup>m</sup> evil against you † falsely, for my sake.

12 <sup>n</sup> Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for <sup>o</sup> so persecuted they

<sup>m</sup> 1 Pe. 4: 14. † *Gr. lying.* <sup>n</sup> Lu. 6: 23; Ac. 5: 41; Ro. 5: 3; Ja 1: 2; 1 Pe. 4: 13. <sup>o</sup> Ne. 9: 26; 2 ch. 36: 16; ch. 23: 34, 37; Ac. 7: 52; 1 Th. 2: 15.

of acts, developing a malignant purpose to injure the person pursued. It therefore becomes expressive in the one thus persecuted, of reproach, ignominy, suffering. But it must be endured *for righteousness' sake*, to secure the blessing promised. Men often refer to the opposition which they meet, and the persecutions they undergo, as a proof of their rectitude. But this in itself is no proof at all. The opposition must result from righteous acts, or it is no evidence of the favor of God. But those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake are good men, and hence are the objects of God's love, and heirs of his kingdom.

11. The sentiment of the preceding verse is continued in this. It will be seen, however, that the preceding beatitudes are of general reference, while in this verse the disciples are particularly addressed. We are cautioned here, as in v. 10, against attaching any praiseworthiness to persecution or reviling in themselves considered, by the limiting expression *for my sake*, at the close of the verse, and also by the word *falsely*, which applies in sense to all the words expressive of persecution and reproach. There is nothing meritorious in suffering, unless endured through devotion to truth and righteousness. *All manner of evil*; literally, *every evil word*, i. e. every kind of charge or accusation. The whole passage might be rendered: shall make all kinds of false charges against you. That this has been done to the followers of Christ, the history of the Church in every age abundantly shows.

12. *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad.*



the prophets which were before you.

13 Ye are the salt of the earth: <sup>p</sup> but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for

<sup>p</sup> Ma. 9: 50; Lu. 14: 34, 35.

In Luke "leap for joy." A highly intensive expression. The sentiment is: Be not disheartened, when thus loaded with obloquy for my sake; but exult in persecution, for your reward shall be proportionally great in heaven. It was the remembrance of these words, which sustained the Apostles and early Christians in the midst of their trials and persecutions, and caused those to be regarded happy who obtained the crown of martyrdom. Heb. 10: 34; James 1: 2; Rev. 2: 10. The reward here spoken of, is a *gift, gratuity, not recompense* in the way of hire or wages, as the word literally signifies. *In heaven.* There is the place of reward. On earth suffering must be expected. Some prefer the spiritual instead of local sense: great is your spiritual or heavenly reward. But the one sense is implied in the other, and I therefore prefer to take the words in their common acceptation. *For so* (i. e. thus unjustly, *persecuted they the prophets, &c.* This is introduced as the ground of their joy. In the midst of trial, they were to remember that they were sharing in the tribulation of the ancient prophets, and in like manner would be partakers with them of their reward in heaven. Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, Amos, all, to a greater or less extent, were subjects of persecution. In Heb. 12: 36-38, their varied forms of suffering and death are briefly enumerated.

13. *Ye are* (to be) *the salt of the earth* (i. e. of mankind). This metaphor is founded upon the well-known seasoning and preserving properties of salt. The human family are sunk in the depths of moral corruption, and exposed to God's righteous displeasure. The gospel furnishes the only remedy for sin. But this must be disseminated through the world, by those who have

nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

14 <sup>q</sup> Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

<sup>q</sup> Pr. 4: 18; Phi. 2: 15.

themselves enjoyed its saving power. Through them the purifying and preserving influence of truth must pervade society. They are to act upon their fellow men in a moral sense, as salt upon the physical objects to which it is applied. *But if the salt have lost its savor* (i. e. become tasteless, insipid), *wherewith shall it be salted*, i. e. by what process can it recover its quality of saltiness. Salt was in part obtained from pools or cavities on the borders of the Dead Sea, from which the water had passed off by evaporation. The incrustation of salt left upon the earth, if gathered at once, was good and useful, but if left and exposed for any length of time to the sun, lost its strength, and became tasteless. This renders intelligible the passage, which, from the different kind of salt used by us, is on its face quite obscure. As the salt, in the condition here spoken of, was worthless, and only fit to be cast out, and trodden under foot, so the followers of Christ may become cold, stupid, and formal, and manifest so little zeal in their Master's service, as almost wholly to lose their moral power over others, and thus render themselves worthless in the great enterprise of reforming mankind. Some think that the reference to tasteless salt is merely hypothetical, and that no such salt ever existed. But hypotheses, drawn from material objects, are generally based on actual facts or occurrences, inasmuch as the impression is deeper and more permanent, than though the reference was to something imaginary.

14. *Ye are the light of the world.* The same general sentiment is here expressed under a varied imagery. As light is the medium through which objects are discerned by the eye, it is used figuratively, to denote the system

15 Neither do men "light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

r Ma. 4 : 21; Ln. 18 : 16, & 11 : 33.

of moral truth contained in the revealed word of God. We speak of the *light of revelation*, denoting thereby the evidence which the Bible furnishes of the existence and character of God, the nature of his government, and the relations we sustain to Him. So by the *light of nature*, is meant the evidence thereby furnished of an intelligent, all-powerful, and benevolent Creator. Now religious teachers are moral lights, because they communicate moral truth, as found in the Word of God, to men. Christ said of John the Baptist, that "he was a burning and shining light" (John 5 : 35), because he was a witness of the truth. So Jesus himself is said to be "the true light, which lighteth every man which cometh into the world" (John 1 : 9), and in the more highly figurative language of Hebrew poetry, he is called (Mal. 4 : 2) "the Son of righteousness, which shall arise with healing in his wings," diffusing light and joy throughout his new moral creation. In a subordinate sense, all his followers are moral lights. They are to enforce the claims of God upon their fellow men, by example, precept, and all the instrumentalities which they can devise to further this great object. In this sense, they are *the light of the world*, and occupy a position of such importance, that it should inspire them with untiring zeal and activity, as long as any portion of the world is without the gospel, or souls unconverted to Christ. *A city that is set upon a hill cannot be hid* (i. e. concealed). This very natural and apposite simile, might have been suggested by some city or village in sight, to which our Lord pointed, as he uttered these words. Some, without any well grounded reason, think that it was Bethulia to which he referred. If Hattin was the hill on

16 Let your light so shine before men, "that they may see your good works, and 'glorify your Father which is in heaven.

17 ¶ "Think not that I am

s1 Pe. 2 : 12. t Jn. 15 : 8 ; 1 Co. 14 : 25.  
u Ro. 3 : 21, & 10 : 4 ; Ga. 3 : 24.

which this discourse was delivered, Howe thinks that Safed, situated upon the gently rising, but high hill, north of the Lake, may well be supposed to occupy the site of the city here referred to. The cities of Judea, as well as of other countries in ancient times, were built mostly upon hills, such elevated situations being deemed more salubrious, as well as secure from the sudden attack of enemies. As these cities were seen at a great distance, and could not be hid by surrounding objects, so Christ's followers would be looked at with the closest scrutiny by their fellow men. They could not shun the observation of those around them, and this constituted the reason for the direction given in v. 16.

15. The argument in this verse is what logicians call the *argumentum a fortiori*, i. e. a reasoning from the *greater* to the *less*. If men are never guilty of the absurdity of placing artificial lights in such a position as to render them useless, *much more* should those, who are the moral lights of the world, see to it that their light is not concealed. The word translated *candle*, signifies any portable light, as a lamp, candle, lantern. The word rendered *bushel*, refers to a Roman measure, holding nearly a peck. It is here the representative of anything, which, placed over a light, would conceal its rays. The original Greek takes the article, *the bushel*, because it was a well known and usual measure in the house. So the following word, *candlestick* (i. e. lamp-stand), has the article in the original for the same reason.

16. *Let your light so shine*. Be thus active and diligent in the dissemination of the truth, and watchful of your deportment, that your zeal and blameless lives may incite men to believe in the

come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily, I say unto you,

"Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

∞ LU. 16 : 17.

reality of the religion you profess, and thus lead them to consecrate themselves to the service of God. So, i. e. in like manner, as a candle, or a city, in their open, appropriate position. *Good works* are here spoken of, because external deportment is the only means by which men can judge of character. "By their fruits ye shall know them." It is assumed, however, that these "good works" are the result of genuine piety. *Which is in heaven.* See N. on 6 : 9. "Thus the praise and glory of a well-lighted and brilliant feast would be given, not to the light, but to the master of the house; and of a stately city on a hill, not to the buildings, but to those who built them." Alford. It may be remarked that this portion of Christ's discourse, is addressed to his followers in general, and not exclusively to those who are ministers of his Word.

17-20. Having shown in vs. 13-16 the conservative and illuminating influence to be exerted upon men by his followers, our Lord proceeds in these verses to show that his mission is not to abrogate, but to give force and strength to the moral law. He teaches that there is no difference to be made in the observance of what has been erroneously denominated great and small commands, for whosoever should give permission to violate one of the so-called least commandments, would be excluded from the kingdom of heaven. This was a blow aimed at the very root of the false teachings of the scribes and Pharisees.

17. *I am come.* A Messianic form of expression. See 11 : 3 ; Luke 7 : 19. *To destroy*, i. e. to abrogate its claims. This the Pharisees did in a great measure, by explaining away many demands of the law, and substituting their vain traditions. *The law and the prophets.* The *law* refers to the five books of

Moses; the *prophets*, to the remainder of the Old Testament, especially to the prophetic and devotional portions (see Acts 24 : 14). The Psalms and Proverbs were included in what was generally denominated the *prophets*, although in Luke 24 : 24, the Psalms are distinguished from the prophetic books. The phrase, *the law and the prophets*, refers here as in 7 : 12 ; 22 : 40 ; Rom. 3 : 21, to the moral precepts of the Old Testament, inasmuch as the words in v. 18, *until all be fulfilled*, cannot be referred to the historical portions, and the parts purely prophetic are not here the subject of the discourse. Nor is the ceremonial law here referred to. How our Lord fulfilled and answered the ends of that, is seen in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapters VII-X. *I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.* The positive and negative form of assertions gives emphasis to the declaration. *To fulfill*, i. e. to fill out, complete, make perfect, by demanding full and perfect obedience to all its requirements. With this meaning is also associated the idea of teaching truly the doctrines and precepts of the law, as appears from v. 19. where the two are expressly connected.

18. This verse is confirmatory of the preceding. *Verily.* This adverb in Hebrew usage, stood at the close of the sentence, in the sense of *Amen*, *so let it be.* In its transferred use, we suffer it to remain in the same position, i. e. at the end of prayers and solemn affirmations. But our Savior often employed it at the beginning of a sentence, containing some weighty truth or declaration. It was equivalent to his saying, *I solemnly affirm.* Sometimes, to impart still greater emphasis, he repeated it, *verily, verily.* So at the close of a solemn train of thought, or one of more than usual importance, the Hebrews would say, *Amen and Amen.* See Ps.

19 \* Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whoso-

α Ja. 2 : 10.

72 : 19. *Till heaven and earth pass*, was a proverbial expression with the Jews, to denote that a thing would never take place. The material, visible universe was to them an image of perpetuity. *One jot or tittle*. The first of these words refers to the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet, called *yodh* [י], corresponding to the Greek letter *iota* [ι], English *jot*, and was applied to any thing small or diminutive. The word *tittle* is thought by some to refer to the dot or point, by which certain Hebrew letters, in other respects alike, are distinguished. But perhaps it is better to take it in the more literal sense of the Greek word here translated *tittle*, which means a *little horn*, and refer it to the fine hair stroke, which, as a sort of flourish, was attached to certain letters in Hebrew manuscripts. The expression is intended as an emphatic declaration, that no portion of *the law* (here put for the whole Old Testament, especially its moral precepts, see N. on v. 17), would be abrogated, until the whole shall be fulfilled, i. e. until all the types and symbols should find their fulfillment, and all the precepts of the law, their full spiritual significance. Alford well notices the honor and authority here given the Old Testament, in contempt and setting aside of which rationalism has always begun.

19, 20. These verses contain an important inference, from the preceding declaration of the perpetuity and binding obligation of the divine law. If any one should teach, that any part of it was of so small importance, that it might be broken with impunity, or should thus violate it himself, he should suffer exclusion from the kingdom of heaven. *Shall break*, i. e. shall regard as of no binding force. This does not refer to the coming short of keeping

ever shall do, and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall

God's law, of which all are guilty, and which fills the pious soul with sorrow and contrition, but a wanton, wilful disregard of its claims for the reason here given. *The least*, i. e. those apparently so, or considered so in the estimation of the Jews, as our Lord admitted no such distinction. Reference is had to what in the preceding verse is called *jot* and *tittle*. *He shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven*. In these words there is an instance of the figure of speech called *paronomasia*, i. e. words are brought together of similar sound, but dissimilar sense (see N. on 20 : 16). If we might coin for the purpose an English word, we would translate: Whosoever therefore, shall break one of these *least* commandments, he shall be *leasted* in the kingdom of heaven," equivalent to saying that he shall be wholly excluded from it. The antithetic expression, *great in the kingdom of heaven*, which follows, must not then be taken as denoting grade or rank, but a full and free entrance (2 Pet. 1 : 11) into that kingdom. The general sentiment is, that none but those, who sincerely strive to obey God's law in its spirit as well as in letter, shall be admitted to the blessings and privileges of the Messianic kingdom. This is evident from v. 20, which is confirmatory and explanatory of what is here couched in figurative terms. *Except your righteousness*, &c. The righteousness of the Pharisees consisted in an outward observance of a mass of traditions, and the ceremonial portions of the Mosaic law. But they hesitated not themselves to break, and teach others thus to do, any enactment of God, which was opposed to their carnal inclinations. A righteousness far different from that of the Pharisees, is taught by our Lord, as essential to be possessed



exceed <sup>v</sup> *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in

*v* Ro. 9 : 31, & 10 : 3.

by all, who would enter into his kingdom. The word *righteousness* is here employed in the sense which it has in vs. 6, 10, and it is not implied that the Pharisees possessed it in the least degree, the word *exceed* having here the sense of difference in *kind*, rather than of degree.

21-26. As an illustration of the Pharisaic interpretation of the law, regarding the outward act only, and overlooking the mental state which gave it birth, our Savior now refers to several examples. He first selects one which falls under the sixth commandment. In exposing the erroneous views of the Pharisees respecting the violation of this command, he inculcates the true spirit and sanction of God's law.

21. *By them of old time.* This refers not to Moses or the Old Testament prophets, but to the ancient expositors of the law. They were the authors of the Jewish traditions. *Thou shalt not kill.* This was referred by the Jews in Christ's time to actual murder only. *Shall be in danger of the judgment,* i. e. liable to the punishment inflicted by the tribunal here referred to, which was an inferior court established in the cities and towns, and subordinate to the Sanhedrim (Deut. 16 : 18). It consisted, according to Josephus, of seven judges, or as the Rabbins say, of twenty-three, with two attendant Levites. This tribunal had cognizance of murder, besides inferior crimes. An appeal could be taken from it to the Sanhedrim. *Shall be in danger of the judgment* is then the same as saying, *shall be liable to the death-penalty.*

22. *Whosoever is angry,* &c. Our Lord proceeds to give quite a different interpretation of the spirit and sanctions of the sixth commandment. Not only was the overt act of murder forbidden, but angry feelings indulged without cause toward a brother. So heinous an offence was this in the sight of God, that whoever was guilty of it was obnoxious

no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

21 ¶ Ye have heard that it

to the trial and punishment for murder. But as angry thoughts in the nature of the case, could be punished by no human tribunal, inasmuch as no judicial cognizance could be taken of them, when confined to the bosom of him who indulged them, the tribunal here referred to, must be of a spiritual nature, or in other words, it must be the bar of judgment, where God will bring every secret thought to light, and where the spirit and temper of the mind will constitute the sole ground of acquittal or condemnation. An angry thought, unrepented of, at that tribunal would convict a man of murder, and subject him to a spiritual punishment, of which capital punishment in human tribunals might be regarded as a type or emblem. So 1 John 3 : 15, "He that hateth his brother is a murderer." *Brother,* i. e. *fellow man,* descended from a common ancestor, and hence in a general sense, our brother. Christ used this term of near relationship, to give emphasis to this common bond, which unites us all together in one great family. *Without a cause.* This teaches that anger in itself is not sinful. Jesus was angry at the Pharisees (Mark 3 : 5). "Be angry and sin not," was an injunction of Paul (Eph. 4 : 26). It is right to be angry at injustice, oppression, vice, and every other sort of wickedness. It is right to defend ourselves from unjust assaults either upon our persons, property, or reputation, and to do this with a feeling of disapprobation of the sin, so strong as to amount to anger. But we are to be extremely careful not to be angry *without a cause,* not let our anger be lasting, or turn into a feeling of revenge or hatred. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath," is a direction to which we should always give great heed. *The judgment,* i. e. the tribunal of divine justice. *Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca.* An increased degree of criminality is here indicated.



was said by them of old time,  
<sup>a</sup> Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment:

22 But I say unto you, That  
<sup>a</sup> whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in

<sup>a</sup> Ex. 20: 13; De. 5: 17.  
<sup>a</sup> 1 Jo. 3: 15.

The causeless anger forbidden in the foregoing clause, is represented as now accompanied with intemperate expressions. *Raca*, thou worthless fellow, thou rascal. But though a higher and more culpable degree of anger is referred to, yet its cognizance does not fall within the province of human tribunals, and hence the crime and its punishment is to be taken in a spiritual sense. Such a person would be amenable to a higher court and one which could inflict a higher punishment, i. e. death attended by more awful circumstances, such as stoning. This is represented here by the *council* or Sanhedrim, the highest tribunal of the Jewish commonwealth. See N. on 2: 4. *But whosoever shall say, Thou fool.* The word rendered *fool*, had in the Hebrew usage the predominant idea of impiety, atheism, ungodliness. Hence it became an epithet of the highest opprobrium, and to call a man thus, was to charge him with one of the highest crimes. As the indulgence of anger was qualified by the words *without a cause*, so here we must consider our Savior to assume, that the person was falsely charged with being a fool or an atheist. In this we have an exhibition of anger of deeper criminality, inasmuch as it charges a man unjustly with one of the highest crimes. This constituted a graver offence, for which the body of the culprit, after execution, was to be cast into the *Gehenna of fire*. This was the unclean valley of Hinnom, where fires, according to some, were kept continually burning, to consume the filth and garbage there deposited; or as others think, called the *place of burning*, from the abominable rites there performed by idolatrous

danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother,  
<sup>b</sup> *Raca*, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.

23 Therefore, <sup>c</sup> if thou bring

<sup>b</sup> Ja. 2: 20.  
<sup>c</sup> ch. 8: 4, & 23: 19.

Jewish kings, such as the burning of infants in sacrifice to Moloch (2 Kings. 23: 10; Jer. 7: 31). That the literal valley of Hinnom is not here referred to, is evident from the well-known fact, that for none of the offences here spoken of by our Lord, did the Jewish courts inflict any punishment. They did not arrest a man and bring him before an inferior court, for being angry without a cause, nor before the Sanhedrim, for uttering abusive language, nor did they cast into the fire of Hinnom, the body of one after his execution, who in a fit of passion called his brother a fool. These must all refer to punishments in the eternal world, to be inflicted on those who violate the spirit of the great command, *thou shalt not kill*. These degrees of guilt, all punishable with death, but in different modes, one more dreadful than another, are made to symbolize the degrees of criminality which shall attach to those, who incur the sentence of eternal death at the judgment-seat of Christ. No higher evidence can be furnished of the strictness of God's law, and the awful punishment which awaits the transgressor in the eternal world.

23. A practical inference is here drawn from the foregoing declaration of our Savior. If such a doom awaits those who indulge in angry feelings and expressions, what care should be exercised against giving offence, and also to remove every just cause of complaint, which any one may have against us. *Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar*, i. e. if you are just on the point of laying your free will offering upon the altar. *That thy brother hath aught against thee*, i. e. that you have

thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee,

24 <sup>d</sup> Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

25 <sup>e</sup> Agree with thine adver-

<sup>d</sup> See Job. 42 : 8 ; ch. 18 : 19 ; 1 Ti. 2 : 8 ; 1 Pe. 3 : 7. <sup>e</sup> Pr. 25 : 8 ; Lu. 12 : 58, 59.

injured your brother in any manner. The expression is remarkable, as not referring to what complaints we have against others, but what complaints we have given ground for them to make against us.

24. *Leave there thy gift, &c.* Wait not to perform the duty of reconciliation after the sacrifice is finished. It may be too late. Death may suddenly overtake thee, and it would be far preferable to appear before God with a sacrifice unfinished, than with a conscience burdened with the guilt of having wronged a brother. *Be reconciled to thy brother.* In the language of Scripture, the one who does the wrong is said to be reconciled, directly the reverse of our use of the expression. Our Lord here teaches that where two duties conflict, or rather present themselves for performance, the lesser is to yield to the greater, and that relative duties take precedence of those which are devotional. The sick are to be attended to, reparation for wrong to be made, the claims of mercy to be met, even though we must omit in consequence some devotional duty. God will have mercy and not sacrifice (9 ; 13).

25. The sentiment of this and the following *verse*, is closely allied to the preceding context. If one is not thus reconciled to his brother, he may expect from his final Judge, a doom similar to what happened to a delaying debtor. *Agree [then] quickly with thine adversary.* The language is here borrowed from the relations subsisting between a debtor and creditor. *Agree*, i. e. be well disposed, be on good terms.

sary quickly, <sup>f</sup> while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

<sup>f</sup> See Ps. 32 : 6 ; Is. 55 : 6.

*With thine adversary*, i. e. the one who has complained against you; the one whom you have injured. In the figurative language here employed, *thy creditor*. *While thou art in the way with him*, i. e. going with him to the magistrate. Stripped of its metaphor: while thou art in the way with him (i. e. thy offended brother) to the tribunal of God. *Lest at any time* which suits his pleasure or inconvenience. *To the judge* to whose tribunal thou art on thy way, *and the judge* [having pronounced sentence against thee] *deliver thee to the officer*. The decrees of magistrates were executed by officers in attendance, answering quite well to our sheriffs or constables. *Cast into prison*, i. e. kept in custody until the payment of the debt.

26. *Thou shalt by no means come out thence, &c.* The Jewish law in respect to debtors was very stringent. They not only shut up in prison insolvent debtors, but sometimes punished them with stripes, and other corporal punishments (see 18 : 28-34). *The uttermost farthing*. As we say, *the last penny*. The piece of money here spoken of, was a small brass coin, not quite equal to two-fifths of a cent. It is used here to represent the completeness of payment demanded as a release from prison. The signification of this metaphorical passage, in the light of the preceding context, is very clear. They who, in the way here referred to, violate the spirit of the great command, "thou shalt not kill," unless they quickly repress their angry feelings, and make reparation to those whom they have

27 ¶ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, *Thou shalt not commit adultery:*

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever <sup>h</sup> looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed

*g* Ex. 20: 14; De. 5: 18. <sup>h</sup> Job. 31: 1; Pr. 6: 25; see Ge. 34: 2; 2 Sa. 11: 2.

injured, will fall under the divine condemnation, and suffer interminable punishment in the world to come. We cannot with Doddridge and others, refer vs. 25, 26, to the mere duty of paying one's debts, in order to avoid suits-at-law. It has a higher and more significant sense, although it may well be said to include the duty of prompt payment of lawful dues. Nor can we refer it, except by way of accommodation, to the duty of immediate repentance and reconciliation with God, which it is thought by so many to directly enforce. The context restricts it to the duty of observing the high spiritual requisitions of the sixth commandment, and the prompt reparation of wrong done to any of our fellow beings. The eternal sanctions of God's law are also brought out with a force, such as they have in but few other passages in God's word.

27-32. Having thus explained the spirit and sanctions of the sixth commandment, our Lord proceeds to a similar elucidation of the seventh. The Pharisees taught that the violation of this commandment consisted only in the external act. The object of Christ was to disabuse his auditors of this erroneous view. Keeping this in mind, there will be little difficulty in understanding this part of his discourse.

27. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.* These are the words of the original command, but explained by the traditional expounders, referred to in the phrase, "them of old time," as applying only to the overt act. This is evident from the different view which Jesus took of its violation.

28. Our Lord in this verse prohibits

adultery with her already in his heart.

29 <sup>i</sup> And if thy right eye || offend thee, <sup>k</sup> pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy

<sup>i</sup> Ch. 18: 8, 9; Ma. 9: 43-47. ¶ Or, *do cause thee to offend.* <sup>k</sup> See ch. 19: 12; Ro. 8: 13; 1 Co. 9: 27; Col. 3: 5.

every thing which tends to inflame or pollute the imagination, or incite wanton desires. *To lust after her*, i. e. in order to feed his lustful desires. This denotes the purpose of the unlawful gaze here forbidden. *Adultery with her already in his heart.* By an application of the principles laid down by Christ in relation to the sixth commandment, which placed unwarranted anger and intemperate expressions under the ban of God's holy displeasure, we may infer that *adultery in the heart* is such a violation of the seventh commandment, that it is almost, if not quite, as offensive to Him, as the grossest acts of uncleanness. The spirit of this command sternly opposes all irregular desires, all loose and licentious conversation, all provocations to sensuality, through whatever sense addressed to the mind.

29. The importance of gaining a supremacy over all the passions, is here urged and enforced. The most important and highly prized members of the body are to be parted with, if their retention shall lead to the commission of this sin. The right eye is to be plucked out and cast away, if it *offend*, that is, if it proves a stumbling-block or furnishes occasion to sin. "If it ensnare thee." Schmucker. *For it is profitable to thee* (see N. on 18: 8). It is for thy temporal and eternal interests, to thus mortify the deeds of the body, and practise the self-denial here referred to. *Thy whole body.* Although the resurrection of the body is here implied, yet it is not, as some suppose, directly taught. The word *body* is used here instead of *soul*, for the sake of conformity with *eye*, in the preceding

whole body should be cast into hell.

30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy

member of the sentence. *Hell*; literally, *Gehenna*, the place of punishment in the invisible world. Nothing is more common than to employ familiar objects, to designate things with which we are less acquainted. Especially is this true of things pertaining to the unseen world. The blessedness of heaven is set forth under imagery, drawn from things around us and palpable to our senses. The saints in glory inhabit a city, they wear crowns, sweep golden harps, are clothed in white raiment, sit on thrones, sing songs of praise. A representation of that which is unseen and eternal, could not in human language be otherwise made. So in speaking of the punishments and woe of the lost, the sacred writers were obliged to use metaphorical language drawn from well known objects of sense. They selected *Gehenna*, derived from two Hebrew words signifying *the valley of Hinnom*, to denote the place of future punishment. The reason is quite obvious. This valley had been the scene of the abominable idolatries of the ancient Israelites. Into the arms of a gigantic image of Moloch, heated by fire applied to the hollow recess beneath, the children of these vile idolaters were thrown and consumed. It was also called *Tophet*, from a Hebrew word signifying *drums*, because these were beaten, to drown the cries of the children thus immolated. Other rites equally bloody, were celebrated in this place. The pious Israelites, on their return from Babylon, held this valley in such abhorrence, that they cut down its pleasant groves, and converted it into a receptacle for all the filth and garbage of the city of Jerusalem. It is said also that fires were kept constantly burning, to consume the dead carcasses thrown there, in

whole body should be cast into hell.

31 It hath been said, 'Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

ℓ De. 24: 1; Ja. 3: 1; see ch. 19: 3, &c; Ma. 10: 2, &c.

order to avoid the contagion, which would otherwise produce pestilence. It will be seen from this, that no name, more suitable to designate the abode of lost souls, could be employed than *Gehenna*, the name of this abominable valley. It was a place of pollution, and was an expressive symbol of the place, where dwell with wicked spirits, those who are polluted with sin. That it is used here of the place of future punishment, there can be no doubt, for the nature of the offence here spoken of, viz. lustful emotions and desires, does not come within the class of civil misdemeanors, and a casting out of the offender into the literal valley of Hinnom, is wholly out of the question. Even if the nature of the offence did not compel us to depart from the literal signification, the idea that the loss of an eye would prevent one's body from being thrown into the valley of Hinnom, being in its literal application so absurd, we should be obliged to search for some higher and more spiritual signification of the passage. Dr. Jahn says that "the word *GEHENNA* is used in this way (viz. for the place of punishment beyond the grave) very frequently in Oriental writers, as far as India."

30. *If thy right hand*, &c. The right hand is selected, for the same reason as the right eye, because it was one of the most important members of the body. The repetition of the idea under this varied form, gives it great emphasis. The general sentiment is that we are to practise the most rigid self-denial, and suffer the most painful privations, rather than to permit the mind to become polluted with unchaste thoughts and desires.

31. Under this general topic, our Lord proceeds to give a true exposition of the law relating to divorces, which



32 But I say unto you, That  
"whosoever shall put away his  
wife, saving for the cause of forni-

*m* Ch. 19:9; Lu. 16:18; Ro. 7:3; 1 Co. 7:10,11.

had become much abused, by the great latitude it gave, as expounded by the Pharisees. *It hath been said.* Reference is had to Deut. 24:1. *Whosoever shall put away his wife, &c.* This statute of Moses was so interpreted by Jews of a later age, as to permit a divorce for the most trivial reason. This was particularly true of the school of Hillel. Their mistake resulted from confounding the moral and civil law. In the latter, Moses, for reasons growing out of the obstinacy and hardheartedness of the people, for whom he legislated, gave a latitude in respect to divorces, which he doubtless intended should be checked by the higher authority of the moral law, one of the fundamental ideas of which, love to our fellow men, required that the rights of the woman should be regarded, as well as those of the man. On the other hand, the school of Sham-mai, by explaining the word rendered *uncleanness* in Deut. 24:1, to mean actual adultery, contended that no license was given by Moses for a divorce, except for the reason there given. But the word *uncleanness*, in the passage quoted, must be taken in a ceremonial rather than in a moral sense, and we must believe that Moses permitted divorce for other reasons, and justify him in so doing, by referring this civil enactment to the condition of the people, and for this we have the authority of our Lord himself in 19:8; Mark 10:5.

32. *Saving for the cause of fornication.* Our Lord here declares in positive terms, that for no other reason than the one here given, can a divorce be lawfully granted. How opposed to this divine rule are the enactments of many of our state legislatures, in legalizing so many grounds of divorce, some of which are quite trivial. It is thought with good reason by Prof. Stuart and others, that Paul (1 Cor. 7:15) added another ground of lawful divorce, wilful and

cation, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery.

persistent desertion. *Causeth her to commit adultery.* These words are not to be forced to their most absolute and unqualified sense. This idea is that divorced persons, especially in Oriental countries, are so exposed to temptation by the degradation of their social position, that in a great majority of instances, they fall into the sin referred to, and thus may be said to be caused to commit adultery by those who put them away. In the searching light of Christ's instructions, all sins may be traced to their primary source. A dreadful train of evil is oftentimes found to follow an act, which through custom or bad legislation, is regarded far otherwise than blameworthy. *Whosoever shall marry, &c.* According to our Lord's exposition, unless she was divorced for the crime of adultery, she was still the wife of the one who put her away, and therefore whoever married her committed adultery, as marrying another man's wife. This does not therefore refer to one who is lawfully divorced. Such a person has the same right to contract a second marriage, as though she had never before been married. What a flood of light is thrown upon the nature and obligations of the marriage covenant, by these words of our Savior. What new and exalted views of God's law must have been imparted to his auditors, as they listened to these disclosures of its spirituality, extent, and power.

33-37. Our Lord now proceeds to descant upon the nature of oaths, and to rebuke the Jewish practice of confirming even the most trivial statements, by an oath, considered more or less binding, according to the dignity or value of the person or thing named in the oath. The subject of judicial oaths is not here touched upon, and they are therefore in an error, who draw from this passage any prohibition of an oath before a court of justice, or any lawful judica-



33 ¶ Again, ye have heard that <sup>n</sup> it hath been said by them of old time, <sup>o</sup> Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but <sup>p</sup> shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths :

34 But I say unto you, <sup>q</sup> Swear not at all : neither by heaven ; for it is <sup>r</sup> God's throne :

<sup>n</sup> Ch. 23 : 16.    <sup>o</sup> Ex. 20 : 7 ; Le. 19 : 12 ;  
<sup>p</sup> Nu. 30 : 2 ; De. 5 : 11.

tory. Nor is profanity the sin against which our Savior inveighs. The object in general was to show the obligations imposed by the ninth commandment to speak the truth on every subject, and to rebuke the habit of taking an oath on every trifling occasion, and making such a distinction in these oaths, that some were regarded of binding force, and others not. As the Jews considered a violation of the sixth and seventh commandments, to consist only in the overt act of killing or committing adultery, so in respect to the ninth, they considered its violation to consist only in swearing falsely by the name of God. They thought it no harm to utter an untruth, and even to confirm it by an oath, provided that this oath was not made in the name of Jehovah. It is necessary to keep this in view, in order to interpret rightly this portion of Christ's discourse, which has suffered strange perversions from those who are opposed to judicial oaths, and oftentimes been misunderstood by sincere inquirers after truth.

33. *Again, ye have heard, &c.* Reference is had to Levit. 9 : 12 ; Deut. 23 : 23. *Forswear thyself*, i. e. swear falsely or perjure thyself. *But shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths*, i. e. such oaths as were taken in the name of the Lord. All other oaths with them imposed no additional obligation to speak the truth. Their views of its being a religious duty to perform unto the Lord their oaths and vows were correct. But they had so frittered the obligation away, that its force was well nigh destroyed. This is evident from the following context, in which our Savior rectifies their theory and practice.

35 Nor by the earth ; for it is his footstool : neither by Jerusalem ; for it is <sup>r</sup> the city of the great king :

36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

<sup>p</sup> De. 23 : 23.    <sup>q</sup> Ch. 23 : 16, 18, 22 ; Ja. 5 : 12.  
<sup>r</sup> Is. 66 : 1.    <sup>s</sup> Ps. 48 : 2, & 87 : 3.

34. *Swear not at all*, as you are in the habit of doing in your common conversations and on every occasion. Such is evidently the point of the prohibition. It has no reference to judicial oaths, but to conversational oaths indulged in as above referred to. *Neither by heaven ; for it is God's throne*. There is nothing by which one can swear, that is not virtually the same as God's name, since all things belong to Him. Heaven is said to be *God's throne*, because there he especially dwells, and manifests Himself as sovereign of the universe.

35. *For it is his footstool ; literally, the footstool of his feet*. In accordance with human language and customs, God is regarded as sitting on his throne in heaven, and resting his feet upon the earth. See Acts 7 : 49. *By Jerusalem ; literally, towards Jerusalem*, the person taking this oath being supposed to *turn and look towards the city*. *For it is the city of the great King*. Jerusalem was called God's city, because there was his temple, with the ordinances pertaining to his worship.

36. *By thy head*. This was a very common form in which oaths were taken in the East, and the custom has continued to the present day. *Canst not make, &c.* This shows the entire ownership which God has in men. They cannot change the form of their bodies, not even to determining the color of a single hair. An oath by one's head or beard, is made therefore by that which belongs wholly and exclusively to God, and is substantially the same, as though made in his name. All such oaths are of solemn import, and should not be employed or broken, as though of no moment.

37 'But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

t Col. 4: 6; Ja. 5: 12.

37. *But let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay.* James (5: 12), with his eye turned on this direction of our Lord, says: "let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay," i. e. when you have affirmed or denied a thing, abide by what you have said, and seek not to add to its claim for belief, by an oath. A simple assertion or denial of a thing, made in strict accordance with truth, is what is here taught by Christ. *For whatsoever, &c.* Any attempt by these oaths to give emphasis or credibility to what you have said, is sinful, and especially so, when joined to statements known to be false. Such appears clearly to be the meaning of this passage, so long held in dispute. Truthfulness, as taught in the ninth commandment, is the great duty inculcated, and with it a prohibition of what may be called *conversational oaths*, or such as are used in ordinary intercourse, to give point or emphasis to things asserted or denied. Judicial oaths, are manifestly not forbidden in this passage, since, as Alford well remarks, they are not inconsistent with the example of God himself (Heb. 6: 13-17; 7: 21), nor of our Lord when on earth, whose "verily, verily, I say unto you," was a solemn asseveration, and who at once respected the adjuration of Caiaphas (26: 63, 64); nor of his apostles, writing under the guidance of his Spirit (Gal. 1: 20; 2 Cor. 1: 23; Rom. 1: 9; Phil. 1: 8; 1 Cor. 15: 31); nor of his holy angels (Rev. 10: 6). Neither does the prohibition to *swear not at all*, refer other than indirectly to profane swearing, which is a violation of the third rather than of the ninth commandment. The word rendered *evil*, may by the presence of the article in the original, be rendered *the evil one*, or *the evil* in man's corrupt nature.

38-42. The spirit of retaliation and revenge, from a false interpretation of

38 ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.

u Ex. 21: 24; Le. 24: 20; De. 19: 21.

the *lex talionis*, or law of retaliation, as laid down by Moses, is in these verses rebuked by our Savior. This law was a part of the civil code, and constituted the way in which compensation was to be made for injuries done to one's person or property. It was never to exceed the original injury, and its execution could be prevented by a timely reparation of the wrong, or by any arrangement satisfactory to the aggrieved party. No one could take this mode of redress into his own hands. It was to be determined by a legal tribunal. In early and ruder times this was the most simple, natural, and effective way of preventing crime, although it has in most countries long been superseded by milder forms and modes of legal procedure. In the time of our Savior, this reasonable law, as the state of society originally was, had given occasion for a spirit of retaliation and revenge, wholly at war with every precept of love and compassion. It was considered perfectly justifiable for any one, who considered himself aggrieved, to take the law into his own hands, and retaliate upon the aggressor any amount of injury he should deem proper. It is with a particular eye to this state of things, that we are to interpret the strong and striking language made use of by our Lord in the passage before us. The principle of *non-resistance* is not here to be found at all. Nor are we taught a passive endurance of what is manifestly unjust. The simple design of Christ is to prohibit a revengeful spirit of retaliation, and to teach his followers to suffer rather than to do wrong.

38. *An eye for an eye* (i. e. thou shalt give an eye for an eye). A judicial formula found in Ex. 21: 24; Deut. 19: 21, in the latter passage with the additional words: "hand for hand, foot for foot." It will be seen in these references, that the statute belonged to the

39 But I say unto you, <sup>z</sup>That ye resist not evil: <sup>y</sup>but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

40 And if any man will sue

<sup>z</sup> Pr. 20 : 22, & 24 : 29; Lu. 6 : 29; Ro. 12 : 17, 19; 1 Co. 6 : 7; 1 Th. 5 : 15; 1 Pe. 3 : 9. <sup>y</sup> Is. 50 : 6; La. 3 : 30.

civil and not to the moral law. Controversies which came under it, were to be decided by judges, and no one could anticipate the regular operation of the law, or decide his own case through a spirit of private revenge. As it respects punishment by mutilation of certain members of the body, it was practised not only by the ancient Israelites, but to a greater or less extent by all the nations of antiquity. Xenophon says, that on the route pursued by Cyrus the Younger, from Sardis to Babylon, it was not uncommon to find along the public roads, men deprived of their feet, hands, or eyes, as a punishment for crime. As Moses laid down the principle rather than the mode of punishment, it may fairly be presumed that the judges would often devise some way by which the ends of justice might be met, and some milder punishment inflicted, especially if the criminal could plead some mitigating circumstances attending his commission of the crime.

39. *That ye resist not evil.* By *evil* is here meant *personal injury*, and not moral evil, which all are bound to resist. In view of the general scope of the passage, it is clear that the thing here forbidden, is a spirit of retaliation and revenge. Those, however, who take words out of their logical connection, and demand the literal signification of every phrase, against the laws of sound interpretation, as well as of common sense, regard this passage as teaching in the most absolute terms the duty of *non-resistance*. But such persons are very slow to obey the letter of v. 40, which they should do, to be consistent with their own principles of interpretation. Our Savior employed strong and unqualified language to rebuke the spirit of revenge, to which the perver-

sion of the Mosaic law of retaliation had given rise. The whole passage, stripped of its figurative dress, is simply this in sense: Be willing rather to suffer injustice, than to manifest a quick, passionate, revengeful spirit of retaliation. Had this patient, enduring spirit been manifested more fully and uniformly by Christ's followers, many a disgraceful scene of contention would have been avoided, and many a church rent by dissensions, would have been blessed with the spirit of harmony and love. *But whosoever shall smite thee*, &c. A proverbial expression, strongly setting forth the duty of curbing the spirit of retaliation, which sudden and unprovoked injuries would be likely to excite. Compare Isa. 50 : 6, where, in prophetic language, the Messiah is said to give his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. His patient and unresisting spirit under contumely and suffering, is set forth in these words, for we are not to interpret them, as though our Savior of his own accord presented his body to receive cruel and ignominious blows (see Lam. 3 : 30). We are not forbidden in this passage, to defend ourselves from unlawful attempts upon our persons or property. Paul's temper was in sympathy with that of Christ, as much so probably as that of any one who has lived, and yet he defended his rights with great spirit, when they had been unjustly assailed. Compare Acts 16 : 37 ; 23 : 3 ; 25 : 10, 11. The danger, however, lies not so much in this quarter, as in the opposite one of betraying too hasty a spirit of retaliation and revenge, and hence upon this falls the whole weight of our Lord's prohibition.

41 And whosoever <sup>z</sup>shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

<sup>z</sup> Ch. 27 : 32; Ma. 15 : 21.

40, 41. These verses teach the same general sentiment, as the preceding one.

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and <sup>a</sup> from him that would  
a De. 15: 8, 10; Lu. 6: 30, 35.

The important lesson of self-control and patience under wrong, was rendered emphatic, by being thus enforced under various forms of expression. *Will sue thee at the law*, &c. More literally, *is wishing to contend at law with you, and to take your coat*. The idea is, do not wait to be brought before the court, and lose your coat by the decision of the judge, but give at once to your adversary, not only your coat, but, should he demand it, your cloak also. Every one must perceive and admit, that this command is not to be taken in its literal sense. The exceedingly strong language made use of, shows, however, the importance of forbearance, and a readiness to suffer rather than to manifest a quarrelsome, litigious spirit. *Coat*. This was the tunic or inner garment, worn next to the skin, and extending down to the knees. It was kept in its place by a girdle, and sometimes made with sleeves. The *cloak* was a piece of cloth nearly square, which being thrown over the tunic, served as a cloak, and also to wrap one's self in at night. This garment could not legally be taken from a person, and this gives still greater point to our Savior's direction, to surrender that also to a grasping creditor. *Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile*. The Roman mile here meant, was about 140 yards less than the English mile. Reference is had in this passage, to the system of posts established by the Persian kings, and retained in some of its features under the Roman authority. Relays of horses were stationed at suitable distances, and when necessary, couriers had a right to press into their service men or horses, to hasten them on in their journey. This compulsory service was at times very oppressive, and hence it furnished a good illustration of the point which our Lord was enforcing. But this, like the preceding direction, must not be understood in a literal sense. It would be a sad departure from the high spiritual duty of a

borrow of thee, turn not thou away.

43 ¶ Ye have heard that it

quiet, submissive spirit, which had rather suffer wrong than do wrong, to interpret this and the preceding verse, as containing mere prudential maxims against incurring the expense and delay of tedious lawsuits, or resisting the exactions of civil governments, when there was no hope of success. Almost as directly opposed to the spirit of the passage also, is the notion, that we are to submit to wrong and oppression, without taking proper means of redress.

42. *Give to him that asketh thee*, &c. This direction must be referred to a spirit of kindness and benevolence, otherwise, if interpreted literally, it would destroy all control and preservation of property. It is manifestly not one's duty, to give to every worthless and indolent vagabond, who asks a gift, nor to lend articles to any chance comer, who may wish to live by borrowing. But our Savior employs this strong language, to enforce the duty of administering freely to the wants of others, when in the exercise of our judgment, they are deserving objects of charity, and even when they are not, provided they are in perishing want of assistance. The duty of alms-giving is to be regulated by a warm and active benevolence, and guided by sound discretion, as to the best method of its exercise. An indiscriminate support of beggars, such as throng the streets of our large cities, is as prejudicial to the true interests of society, and even in the end to the persons thus assisted, as the opposite hardheartedness, which drives every suppliant away unassisted. The word translated *would borrow*, literally signifies *to lend to one's self*, i. e. to effect a loan from some person to one's self. Interest in all such cases was forbidden. See Ex. 22: 25; Levit. 25: 37; Dent. 23: 20. *Turn not away*, i. e. refuse not his request.

43—48. Our Savior in these verses, advances to the high and heavenly duty of love to all, even to one's enemies.



hath been said, <sup>b</sup>Thou shalt love thy neighbor, <sup>c</sup>and hate thine enemy :

44 But I say unto you, <sup>d</sup>Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that

<sup>b</sup>Le. 19: 18. <sup>c</sup>De. 23: 6; Ps. 41: 10. <sup>d</sup>Lu. 6: 27, 35; Ro. 12: 14, 20. <sup>e</sup>Lu. 23: 34; Ac. 7: 60; 1 Co. 4: 12, 13; 1 Pe. 2: 23, & 3: 9.

Not only was forbearance under ill-treatment to be practised, but benevolence was to be cherished for all, even our greatest foes. This does not imply that we are to approve of their bad conduct. We may detest that and reprove them for it, and yet be filled with the most ardent and benevolent desire to do them good, and secure their eternal well being. No rebukes of sin were more pointed and terrible than those of our Lord, and yet in order to do them good, he ate with publicans and sinners, and turned not away from the vilest and most degraded. No one suffered more than he, from the cruel malice of his enemies, and yet his last prayer showed the yearnings of his benevolent spirit over their sad condition. This love toward enemies is one of the highest Christian virtues. It is unknown to the carnal and ungenerate heart. Only by union with Jesus Christ, and imbibing his spirit, can one possess this sweet and heavenly grace.

43. *Thou shalt love thy neighbor* (Levit. 19: 18), *and hate thine enemy*. This latter clause was added by the Jews, because by their improper restriction of the meaning of *neighbor* to their friends and immediate acquaintances, they supposed that all others, especially the Gentiles, they were allowed to hate. In the parable of the good Samaritan, our Lord showed the true meaning of *neighbor* to be a *fellow-man*, any member of the human family. The Greek word for neighbor, literally signifies *one who is near by*. As members of the human family and descended from a common ancestor, we are all neighbors to one another. In this general sense the word *brother* is

hate you, and pray <sup>e</sup>for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you :

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for <sup>f</sup>he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the

<sup>f</sup>Job 25: 3.

also used. See N. on v. 22. *Hate thine enemy*. This has reference not only to the feeling of hatred, but to its active exercise. *Enemy*, i. e. any one out of thy immediate circle of friends.

44. Perhaps there is no precept to be found in the whole circle of language, sacred or profane, of more transcendent beauty and excellence, than that contained in this verse. It is worthy of being engraved on every heart, in the midst of so many temptations to a vindictive, unforgiving spirit, as beset us on every side in the walks of life. *Love your enemies*, i. e. not only those you call your neighbors, but every one else. The love of *benevolence* is here required, not of *complacency*, which is due to those only of an upright character. Even our personal enemies are to be embraced in our benevolent regards, not because they are our enemies, but our fellow-men. *Bless them that curse you*, i. e. invoke God's blessing upon them, pray for their welfare, and address them with words of kindness. Such prayers are always attended with a most delightful reflex influence upon the soul of the petitioner. Nothing is so promotive of a spirit of forgiveness, as to pray for one's enemies; nothing brings the soul into such intimate union with Christ, as invoking blessings upon their head. *Curse* is here antithetic to the word *bless*, and therefore means *denounce all manner of evil upon one*. This includes not only all private and personal ebullitions of hatred and malignity, but also all anathemas, whether pronounced by wicked men in their individual capacity, or as religious organizations, fulminating their decrees of excommunication and their bulls of excommunica-

good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 <sup>9</sup> For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye?

g Lu. 6:32.

tion. *Do good.* Exercise towards them acts of goodness, as opportunity may be furnished, and thus endeavor to win them to the possession of a better spirit. *That hate you, i. e.* who manifest their hatred to you, by doing you every possible injury. *Pray for.* There is a shade of difference between this, and the word *blest* in the previous clause. That signifies to *invoke blessings upon*, this, to *supplicate in one's behalf*. In their application here there is not much difference. The one implies the other. *That despitefully use you.* A strong expression, denoting abuse of the worst kind. So the word *persecute* in the next clause, signifies here a malicious and unrelenting effort to do one mischief, a pursuit of one with malicious intent, as animals are hunted down by their pursuers (see N. on 5:10). The antithesis in all these clauses is well preserved. The most heavenly temper of mind is commanded by our Lord to be exercised towards those even, whose conduct and disposition are the very opposite, and who meet all such acts of kindness with hatred and fresh abuse.

45. *That ye may be the children, &c.* i. e. like your Heavenly Father in benevolence and well-doing. This is the end or object of such a forgiving temper, as is here enjoined. God's treatment of his enemies is illustrated in the next clause, *for he maketh his sun to rise, &c.* All the agencies of nature are made subservient to the temporal welfare of the evil, as well as of the good. The sunshine and the rain, the two great causes of the earth's productiveness, are bestowed upon those, who in their atheistic hearts are continually saying, *no God, no God.* Year after year rolls away, fruitful seasons follow upon one another, worldly possessions and comforts increase, temporal blessings are spread all along the pathway of life, and

do not even the publicans the same.

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more

the recipients of all this good, express not one heartfelt thank, or feel one grateful emotion. Yet the benevolent care of God suffers no abatement. The sun continues to rise upon them in all its brilliancy and cheering rays, the fertilizing showers to descend, the earth to bring forth its wonted productions. What evidence of God's long-suffering, forbearance, and benevolence! In forgiving our enemies and striving to do them good, we imitate the example of our Heavenly Father, and are thus worthy of being called His children.

46, 47. If our acts of kindness were restricted to our friends only, we should not be distinguished from the vilest of men. Even publicans are capable of entertaining such love. They are ready to show favors to those from whom they expect a like return. *What reward have ye?* What remarkable thing do ye, which entitles you to any special reward? The reward is that referred to in the preceding verse, of being like our Heavenly Father and receiving his approval. *Publicans, i. e.* Tax-gatherers. The collection of revenue in conquered provinces was farmed out at Rome, generally to those of high rank and influence. These persons let out the collection of the taxes to sub-contractors residing in the province. In Judea, however, the farmers-general and the subordinate agents were Jews. To the former class belonged Zaccheus (Luke 19:2), who was styled "chief among the publicans." Under him were doubtless many sub-contractors, who employed in collecting the taxes the persons denominated *publicans*. In order that all these agents might be remunerated, the amount actually collected was much greater than the sum originally assessed. The extortion oftentimes practised by these tax-gatherers (see Luke 3:13), made the burden of taxation still more oppressive. On this

than others? do not even the publicans so?

48 <sup>4</sup> Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

<sup>7</sup> Ge. 17:1; Le. 11:44, & 19:2; Lu. 6:36; Col. 1:28, & 4:12; Ja. 1:4; 1 Pe. 1:15, 16. <sup>1</sup> Ep. 5:1.

account, the publicans were held in such detestation, that they were classed with the vilest persons in society. In the parallel passage in Luke 6:34, the word *sinner*s is employed instead of *publicans*. Their name was synonymous with every thing bad, and they were as odious to the Jews, as the heathens themselves (see 18:17). *Salute*, i. e. bestow a friendly greeting. The forms and modes of salutation were observed with great care among all Oriental nations. *Brethren*. Here fellow citizens, countrymen, neighbors in the Jewish acceptance of the term. See N. on v. 43. *What do ye more than others?* You do nothing of any remarkable excellence.

48. *Be ye therefore perfect*, i. e. in respect to this duty of universal benevolence. So Luke in the parallel passage (6:36), "Be ye merciful," &c. The sentiment is that it should be the great aim of life to conform our conduct, habits, and temper to the requirements of Jehovah, especially in this cardinal virtue of benevolence.

In this chapter, we see how exalted and spiritual were the views entertained by our Savior, of God's moral law. The reference to particular precepts, in the form, "ye have heard that it hath been said," ends with this chapter, the residue of the discourse being on more general topics, and yet all bearing on the extent and spirituality of the divine requirements.

#### CHAPTER VI.

Our Lord now proceeds to rebuke the ostentatious manner, in which the Pharisees performed their acts of worship and benevolence. He teaches that all pomp and parade are to be avoided, and that instead of striving to gain

#### CHAPTER VI.

TAKE heed that ye do not your **T** alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

|| Or, *righteousness*. De. 24:13; Ps. 112:9; Da. 4:27; 2 Co. 9:9, 10. <sup>1</sup> Or, *with*.

notoriety from our good deeds, we should seek rather to conceal them from our fellow-men. The favor and approval of God is to be the controlling motive in alms-giving, devotional exercises, and all other duties. This great principle is illustrated by a reference to alms-giving (vs. 1-4), prayer (5-15), fasting (16-18), after which, general directions in respect to entire consecration to God, and the relative importance of things spiritual over those that are temporal, fill up the remaining portion of the chapter.

1. *Take heed*. Be watchful; be on the alert. The expression is highly intensive. *Do not your alms*. Such was the oppression of the Jews under tyrannical and rapacious Roman governors, that in the time of Christ, the number of mendicants was very large. They thronged the highways, sat in the streets, besieged the doors of the rich, and the entrance into synagogues. Dr. Jahn thinks, however, that there was no such class as vagrant beggars, presenting their supplication for alms from door to door. But for this opinion, he seems to furnish no adequate proof. In the most critical editions of the Greek Testament, the word for the marginal reading *righteousness*, is adopted as the true reading. If that be so, it must be taken in its generic sense, as embracing the specifications of alms-giving, prayer, fasting, brought to view in vs. 2-18. *Before men*. This is explained and limited by the following clause, *to be seen of them*. The bestowal of alms in the sight of others is not in itself wrong, and may be often unavoidable, but the sin consists in doing so, in order to be seen of men, and gain the eclat and notoriety, which such acts would be adapted to call forth. *Other-*

2 Therefore, <sup>a</sup> when thou doest *thine* alms, || do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

a Ro. 12: 8. || Or, *cause not a trumpet to be sounded.*

*wise*, i. e. if human applause is your motive. *Ye have* is future in sense. Rewards and punishments in their full measure, will be given beyond the grave.

2. *Therefore*, in view of the caution just given. *Alms* in the sense which it has in the preceding verse. *Do not sound a trumpet.* Some refer this to the sounding of a horn or trumpet, under pretence of gathering together the poor to receive alms, but in reality to give publicity to their deeds of benevolence. But the words *in the synagogues*, seem to render this literal interpretation inadmissible. It is better, therefore, to regard it as a figurative representation of the noisy, ostentatious way in which these hypocrites bestowed alms. The general direction is to be not ostentatious in acts of benevolence. *Before you*, either referring to the horn held before one, when applied to the mouth to be sounded, or to another person going before as *horn-blower*. *Hypocrites*; literally, *those who play on the stage or act a part*, hence, *those who practice an outside show*, i. e. dissemblers, hypocrites. *In the synagogues.* The term here includes public assemblies of any sort. It was the custom among eastern nations for persons to distribute alms, when on the way to public assemblies. *Streets*, not *lanes* or *alleys*, as in Luke 14: 21, but *wide streets*, as is evident from the connection. *That they may have glory of men.* This was their ruling motive. They acted from pure selfishness. Their good deeds were thus deprived of all praiseworthiness, and rendered most detestable in the sight of God. *They have their reward.* Human praise was what they coveted.

Vol. I.—3\*

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself <sup>b</sup> shall reward thee openly.

b Lu. 14: 14.

This they obtained. There was nothing more that they wished, nothing more they were to have. The divine blessing, with which they are rewarded who give from conscientious motives, these hypocrites were never to enjoy. They had the reward they sought, but their *due* reward was reserved for the future life.

3. *When thou.* The singular is employed to give emphasis and directness to the command. *Let not thy left hand,* &c. An allusion is thought to be found here to the custom of placing the contribution box for the poor, on the right side of the entrance to the synagogue. Our Lord's direction then would be not to so elevate the hand, when the money was dropped in, that persons around might see the amount deposited, but to take such pains to conceal the act, that the left hand, if possessed of the power of vision, would not be able to ascertain what the right hand had been doing. The phrase is evidently proverbial, and denotes the utmost secrecy possible in performing the act. A simple and unostentatious spirit of almsgiving is here required.

4. *May be in secret*, i. e. as far as possible concealed from others. There are occasions, as has been remarked (N. v. 1), where it is impossible and undesirable in the nature of the case, that absolute privacy in the bestowal of alms should be observed. Nay, there are instances, when one is to let his light shine in examples of self-denying benevolence, that others may imitate him in this Christian virtue. See 5: 16; 2 Cor. 9: 2. It is necessary also, in the multiplied agencies of benevolence in the present day, that associa-



5 ¶ And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, <sup>c</sup>enter into thy closet, and

<sup>c</sup> 2 Ki. 4: 33.

tions and individual donors, shall be informed of the reception of their donations. This cannot be done by mailed letters without great trouble and expense, and hence the acknowledgment must be made, as is now done, in the printed publications of the various societies. All that our Savior means to forbid, is parade and display in giving alms. Secrecy in the performance of this duty is to be observed, whenever it is feasible, and does not conflict with the higher duty of setting an example of benevolence to others. *Seeth in secret*. Some interpret: *things that are done in secret*. But Alford well remarks, that it is like our phrase, *seeth in the dark*. See Ps. 139: 11, 12. *Openly*, i. e. before men and angels at the day of final account.

5. The duty of prayer and the spirit with which it is to be offered, are now discoursed upon by our Savior. *When thou prayest*. It is here assumed that every one prays, who hopes to obtain God's favor. *Shall not be*, i. e. shall not so engage in this exercise. *For they love to pray*. The collocation of the words in the original is marked and emphatic: *for they love, in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets standing to pray*. They had no love for this act of devotion, only as it furnished the occasion of an ostentatious display of their piety. They did it, "that they might be seen of men." *Standing*. The Pharisees stood in the streets, and offered their prayers and doxologies, in the sight of every passer-by. No argument, however, for or against this pos-

ture in prayer, can be drawn from this passage. It would appear from 1 Sam. 1: 26; 1 Kings 8: 22, that standing was the ordinary posture of prayer. *Corners of the streets*, i. e. in the angles or corners where streets meet or cross one another, and where they would be most exposed to public notice. *They have their reward*. The same solemn avowal, that such mockery of prayer receives its reward only in the present life, is made here, as in v. 2, in relation to hypocritical alms-giving.

7 But when ye pray, <sup>d</sup>use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: <sup>e</sup>for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

<sup>d</sup> Ec. 5: 2.

<sup>e</sup> 1 Ki. 18: 26, 29.

6. *When thou prayest*. Private or secret prayer is evidently here referred to. *Enter into thy closet*. The word rendered *closet*, literally signifies a *store-room*, *store-chamber*, and hence, as these were secured against improper entrance, any place of privacy, as a *chamber* or *closet*. The spirit of this injunction is kept, if we retire by ourselves to pray, whether in a private closet, chamber, open field, or grove. It is not to be taken literally, for God is every where present, and does not limit his worshippers to any particular place for their private devotions. It is very desirable however, for all to have, if possible, some fixed place and season for their daily prayers, that the combined influence of habit and association, may lend its aid to the regular and uninterrupted discharge of the duty. *When thou hast shut thy door*, i. e. used every precaution against being interrupted. *Which is in secret*, i. e. who is invisible to mortal eyes.

7. Christ now proceeds to give directions, as to the manner in which prayer

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

is to be offered. *Use not vain repetitions;* literally, *do not Battologize*, i. e. use words as Battus did. According to some, he was a very loquacious poet, whose hymns were full of repetitions. Others say that he was a Libyan king, who stammered badly, and from this received his name. However this may be, the word here refers unquestionably to long continued prayers filled with irrelevant and unmeaning repetitions, as when a stammerer repeats words or portions of words without meaning. Thus the prophets of Baal prayed, in their contest with Elijah (1 Kings. 18 : 26). Such also are the *pater-nosters* and *ave-Marias* of the Romish church. Nothing can be more directly opposed to this injunction of Christ, than the prescription by Romish priests of the number of times these vain forms are to be repeated, in order to prove efficacious for the purpose intended. *As the heathen*, i. e. the gentile nations. All these, as far as the worship of the true God was concerned, were really heathen. *Much speaking*, i. e. their long prayers and repetition of the same thing over and over. Augustine says in effect, that our Lord's injunction is against *much speaking*, not against *much praying*.

8. *Like them*, in an empty repetition of words and prayers of inordinate length, as though God did not at first hear them, and had no intelligence of their wants. *For your Father knoweth*, &c. It is not the design of prayer to inform God of our condition, as though he was not well acquainted with it (Ps. 139 : 1-5). It is a divinely appointed instrumentality or channel, through which God has chosen to confer blessings on his children. Our Savior teaches us here, that we should not entertain low ideas of God, as though he needed to be aroused by oft repeated ejaculations and startling cries, like the heathen gods. Fervent, importunate prayer is

9 After this manner therefore pray ye : *Our Father* which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

*f* Lu. 11 : 2, &c.

not forbidden. Our Lord's example in Gethsemane shows that a petition oftentimes repeated, when it comes from the depths of the soul, is not offensive to God. The woman, who followed the unjust judge with the continual cry, "avenge me of my adversary," furnished an illustration of the cry of God's elect day and night, which Jesus declared should be effectual. The supplications of a pious parent in behalf of an impenitent son, may be attended with such anguish of heart over his lost condition, that God's converting grace will be implored in petitions, long continued and of almost unvarying form. So from the heart of the convicted sinner, little else may be ejaculated than the cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." In all these and similar cases of fervent, intercessory prayer, there is no violation of the direction here given by our Savior.

9. *After this manner*. Our Lord's prayer is here given as a pattern or form, in spirit and brevity wholly antithetic to the *battologizing* prayers condemned in the preceding verses. It is not intended as an absolute formula. The variations between this and that given by Luke (11 : 2-4), are fatal to such an assumption. Nor have we any traces of its liturgical use in apostolic times. Tholuck says, that it does not occur in the Acts, nor in any writers before the third century. We cannot regard it, therefore, as a set form of words, to be repeated on every public or social occasion, but rather as a model in comprehensiveness, brevity, and adaptedness to our relation to God and our fellow-men. It is the essence and spirit of this prayer, which is presented for our imitation, and not its very words and form. Yet it may be uttered, very appropriately by us, both in our public and private devotions.

*Our Father*. God, as their creator and preserver, is the Father of all men.

10 Thy kingdom come. <sup>g</sup> Thy<sup>g</sup> Ch. 26: 39, 42; Ac. 21: 14.<sup>h</sup> Ps. 103: 20, 21.

But to Christians, he sustains this relation in a peculiar sense, being their spiritual Father, and the author of all their spiritual blessings. The plural *our* is used, as Tholuck well remarks, because Christians are members of one body, and hence each one feels the wants of the whole, and shares also in the glory of the whole. It is said by Alford, that "this was a form of address almost unknown in the old covenant: now and then hinted at, as reminding the children of their rebellion (Isa. 1: 2; Mal. 1: 6), or mentioned as a last resource of the orphan desolate creature (Isa. 63: 16); but never brought out in its fulness, as indeed it could not be, till He was come by whom we have received the adoption of sons." *Which art in heaven.* The Jews made a three-fold division of the upper regions, to each of which they assigned the name *heaven*; 1. The aerial or atmospheric heaven (see 16: 2; Mark 14: 62; Luke 8: 5); 2. The starry heaven or firmament, in which as a solid concave sphere (see N. on 3: 16), they supposed the sun, moon, and stars to be fixed (see Mark 13: 25; Heb. 11: 12); 3. The upper or higher heaven, far above the visible firmament, the seat of God and his angels. To this refers their expression *the heaven of heavens, the highest heavens.* In this sense the word is used in the Lord's prayer. It may be regarded in a twofold aspect, as opposed to the heathen notion, that the Deity had his abode on some mountain like Olympus, and as representative of the infinite power, omnipresence, and glory of God. It is equivalent to *Our Father, the glorious and almighty God*, opposed to idols and images, the work of men's hands, and to every pantheistic notion, that God is identical with ourselves and every thing around us. In other words, it assumes that he is a personal Being, every where present, yet dwelling especially in heaven, the seat of his glory. The expression must then be regarded, as symbolical of God's omni-

will be done in earth, <sup>h</sup> as it is in heaven.

presence, and his exaltation above all space or local habitation.

*Hallowed be thy name*, i. e. let thy name be revered or sanctified in our heart (1 Pet. 3: 15). The proper name of God is not here referred to, but his being and essence, known only to us, as far as it is revealed in his word. For this mysterious and unfathomable nature, the name of God is often put in Scripture. Hence his name *JEHOVAH*, revealed to Moses (Ex. 6: 2, 3), was held in such profound reverence by the Jews, that they deemed it profanity even to speak it. In a higher and more spiritual sense, God's name is to be revered by us. It should call forth the most profound adoration. It should never be lightly spoken, inasmuch as it belongs to the great and glorious Being, compared with whom the whole created universe and all its intelligences, are as the dust in the balance.

10. *Thy kingdom come.* This petition refers to the establishment and universal acknowledgment of Christ's kingdom on earth. Its position in the prayer shows its paramount importance. Indeed it includes every other blessing. In praying for the advancement of this kingdom, we pray for the individual, as well as the general interests of all men. We pray for the diffusion of Christianity with all its attendant blessings. We pray for the moral and political elevation of all men, for the uprooting and disappearance of every vice, and for the practice of every virtue. We pray that man may be restored to the image of his God, and that this earth may become a moral paradise, where the tabernacle of God may again dwell with men. Of what unspeakable moment is the right utterance in prayer of the short petition, contained in these words, "Thy kingdom come." *Thy will be done* (literally, *become, take place*) *in earth, as it is in heaven*; literally, *as in heaven* (thus) *also upon earth.* This is the result of the universal prevalence of the Messiah's kingdom on earth. God's

11 Give us this day our <sup>i</sup> daily bread.

<sup>i</sup> See Job. 23:12; Pr. 30:8.

revealed will is here referred to. His secret will or purpose is being accomplished, at all times and in all places of his dominion (Dan. 4:35; Isa. 46:10; Rom. 9:19). The will of God referred to in this petition, relates to his commands and precepts. These are obeyed in heaven. We are to pray that they may receive equal obedience on earth. Holy men in every age of the Christian church have offered up this petition. Thousands of the pious are now praying for its accomplishment. The time, though long deferred, will come, when the heathen shall be given to Christ, as his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession (Ps. 2:8). It is no argument against the power and importance of prayer, that this glorious consummation has been so long delayed. The times and seasons for the fulfilment of God's promise to his Son, he reserves in his own keeping, and none should doubt His faithfulness, because the world's conversion is not at once accomplished.

11. *Give us this day.* Our temporal wants are to be the subjects of prayer, as well as spiritual blessings. Both are essential to our happiness and usefulness. In importance, however, the one infinitely transcends the other, for a failure in our temporal supplies involves the death only of the body, but spiritual destitution is the death of the soul. This petition shows the necessity of daily prayer. "Give us *this day*." No other wants are referred to, save those of the day on which the prayer is offered. We are thus taught our daily dependence. This petition is as necessary and appropriate for the wealthy as the poor. All are indebted to Him, for the supply of their daily wants. *Our daily bread.* The word translated *daily*, might be more properly rendered, *substantial, necessary, that which is just enough, or required* for our subsistence. The word is found only here, and seems to have been coined for the occasion. The di-

12 And <sup>k</sup> forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

<sup>k</sup> Ch. 18:21, &c.

versity of senses given it by commentators, on purely etymological grounds, will always therefore probably remain. The word *bread* is here used generically, for all the temporal necessities and wants of life.

12. *And forgive us our debts.* In a moral sense, the word *debt* is used to denote sin. There is a fitness in this. Full and perfect obedience is due to God from all his creatures. Failing as we do to perform this duty, we become his debtors, and we pray that our debts may be remitted to us, or in other words, that our sins may be forgiven. *As we forgive our debtors* (i. e. those who have injured us). The word *as* is susceptible of two significations, which impart a shade of difference to the general sense. If it be translated *inasmuch as*, then the clause with which it stands, denotes a reason or argument, why forgiveness of sin is implored of God, viz. the practice of forgiveness on the part of the petitioner. The sentiment would then be: If we, frail, erring men, forgive one another, may we not hope that the merciful God will forgive us our offences against Him? The other sense, *according as, like as*, denotes similarity in *kind*, but not in *degree*, as the sum total of all the instances of human forgiveness, would not equal the amount forgiven in a single soul, whom God receives into his favor. It also makes a readiness on the part of the suppliant to forgive those who have offended him, a condition on which God is asked to forgive sin. This appears to be the true sense of *as*, although the other sense is in a measure implied in it. Forgiveness of injury on our part, is an essential prerequisite to obtaining pardon from God (see vs. 14, 15). We are not to include those cases, where the offender gives no evidence of having repented. Yet in reference to such persons even, we are to manifest a spirit of forgiveness, and be in readiness to grant it, when they are in a frame of



13 And <sup>l</sup>lead us not into temptation, but <sup>m</sup>deliver us from evil. "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever: Amen.

14 ° For if ye forgive men their

*l* Ch. 26: 41; *Lu.* 22: 40, 46; *1 Co.* 10: 13; *2 Pe.* 2: 9; *Re.* 3: 10. *m* *Jno.* 17: 15.

mind, which shall render them suitable to receive it. We must not suppose, however, that our forgiveness of injury lays God under any obligation to pardon us. It is an act of grace on his part, whatever we do, or whatever the relations we sustain to our fellow men. Doddridge well remarks on this passage, that "it is hardly possible to imagine a more effectual expedient to promote the forgiveness of injury than this, of making it a part of our daily prayer, to ask such pardon from God as we impart to an offending brother."

13. *And lead us not into temptation.* In this petition we do not pray, that God will not induce us to sin, for in this sense God tempts no man (*James* 1: 13). But we pray, that he will not bring us by his providence into circumstances of temptation and sin. This sense is demanded by the antithetic clause, *but deliver us from evil*, where *evil* or *the evil* (see *N.* on 5: 37) is opposed to *temptation*, and imparts to it a deeper signification than mere *trial*. When we pray, however, that God will not lead us into temptation, we necessarily include in it the idea of exposure to temptation. Sometimes God in his wise providence sees fit thus to expose us, in order to test our principles, try our faith, and correct our faults. We are then commanded to rejoice (*James* 1: 2), but are not, nevertheless, through self-confidence to expose ourselves to temptations, but are rather to pray for deliverance from such fiery trials. *For thine*, &c. This doxology is wanting in *Luke* 11: 1-4, and is regarded by the best critics, as being probably introduced in the fourth century. If not genuine, the sentiment is yet true, and comports admirably with the prayer to which it is appended. The introduction of this

trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15 But <sup>r</sup>if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

16 ¶ Moreover, <sup>q</sup>when ye fast,

*n* *1 Ch.* 29: 11. *o* *Ma.* 11: 25, 26; *Ep.* 4: 32; *Col.* 3: 13. *p* *Ch.* 18: 35; *Ja.* 2: 13. *q* *Is.* 58: 5.

doxology by *for*, shows that the glory of God is to be the ultimate object of our prayers. *Kingdom*. The kingly power of the universe. *Power*. Omnipotence, sovereignty. *Glory*. Majesty, royal dignity. All these terms are borrowed from earthly royalty, but how infinite in sense when used of Jehovah. *For ever*. This expression denotes endless duration. In *Luke* 1: 33, it is said that Christ shall reign *for ever*, and of his kingdom there shall be *no end*, where the parallelism shows that *for ever* is to be taken in the sense of unlimited duration. *Amen*. A solemn and emphatic *so let it be, so be it* (see *N.* on 5: 18).

14, 15. Our Lord here enlarges upon the duty of forgiveness, as a preparation of heart for prayer. These verses must be regarded, therefore, as an expanded repetition of v. 12. *Your heavenly Father will also forgive you*. The sacred writers, in treating of any Christian virtue, often speak of it, as though it were the chief one. In 12: 37, our Lord says, "by thy words thou shalt be justified." Paul says (*Rom.* 3: 28) that "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law;" but *James* (2: 24) declares that "by works a man is justified and not by faith only." In the passage before us, our Savior makes forgiveness of injury a prime virtue. The implication in all the passages quoted is, that the possession of one Christian virtue implies the possession of all the rest. The prominence given to one over another arises from the connection in which it stands, and the purpose for which it was introduced. The object of Paul was to prove the necessity of faith, that of *James*, to show that faith was dead unless accompanied by good works. Our Lord in 12: 37 was speaking against the utterance of idle words,

be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward.

17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face ;

r Ruth 3:3; Da. 10:3.

and here his great design is to impress upon his hearers the duty of forgiveness. There is no disagreement in this diversity of expression, in reference to these cardinal virtues.

16. Fastings were frequently observed by the Jews, especially by the Pharisees. See Luke 18 : 12. Our Savior now proceeds to show in what a fast truly consisted, and rectifies the false views of those, who looked only upon the outward tokens of its observance. *When ye fast.* While our Lord did not expressly enjoin the particular duty of fasting, yet it is evidently implied that occasional fasts were proper, and that his disciples and followers would observe such days. *Of a sad countenance.* Stripped of their external garments and covered with sackcloth, with downcast looks, and faces deformed with ashes or dust of the earth, the Pharisees made the most ostentatious display of their fastings, and thus gained the reputation of great sanctity. *For they disfigure their faces.* The word rendered *disfigure*, signifies *to cause to disappear, to conceal from sight*, and refers here to such a defilement of face with dust and ashes, and such a dejection of the features, as almost to conceal the true countenance. *That they may appear, &c.* This was the sole object of their bodily mortifications. They loved the praise of men more than that of God, and like those who made a merit of alms-giving and prayer (vs. 2 : 5), had their sole reward in the present life.

17. *Anoint thy head, &c.* The Jews were in the habit of doing this at stated times each day. Hence our Lord virtually directs his followers, to let their

18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father, which is in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

19 ¶ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and

s Pr. 23:4; 1 Ti. 6:17; He. 13:5; Ja. 5:1, &c.

external appearance be the same on fast days, as on other days, and to avoid the filthy practice of the Pharisees on such occasions. It need hardly to be said, that this direction is not to be taken in its literal sense. No one can well suppose that all Christ's followers, in whatever place or time they may live, are to wash and anoint themselves, previous to entering upon the duty of fasting. The only thing intended is to caution them against ostentation and hypocrisy in religious duties.

18. *That thou appear not, &c.* There is no injunction here for absolute privacy in fasting. There may be social and public fasts. The members of one's family, and those with whom there is daily intercourse, cannot well be kept in ignorance, when a day is set apart for religious fasting and prayer. Every such direction must be interpreted as involving a principle, and is not to be regarded according to the teachings of the mere letter.

19. A covetous disposition, looking only to the amassing of earthly riches, is here forbidden by our Savior. The acquisition of wealth for its own sake, turns the heart away from God, and sets up the idol of Mammon, which is more difficult to be dethroned and more insatiate in its demands, than any other form which the God of this world assumes, to darken and debase the human mind. Against nothing are such tremendous threats directed in God's word, as against the pursuit and possession of riches for one's own gratification (Mark 10 : 23, 24 ; Luke 18 : 24 ; James 5 : 1-5). *Lay up not for yourselves.* The prohibition is not against the accumulation of wealth in itself considered.

where thieves break through and steal :

20 ' But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither

† Ch. 19 : 21 ; Lu. 12 : 33, 34, & 18 : 22 : 1 Ti. 6 : 19 ; 1 Pe. 1 : 4.

Many branches of business require an extensive capital. Works of public utility are dependent mainly on large capitalists. It is right also to make suitable provision, against the time of sickness and old age. But we are forbidden the laying up treasures *for ourselves*, to gratify carnal ease and indulgence, to make a display, and to gain the notoriety and worldly respect, which the possession of great wealth confers. The evil lies in the selfish motive, which actuates one to acquire riches. If a man's purpose in gaining wealth is to employ it in the service of God, he commits no sin in thus doing. Every thing depends upon the motive. But here there is need of great caution, and of prayerful self-examination, since even all one's goods may be bestowed to feed the poor (1 Cor. 13 : 3), and tithes may be given of all one possesses (Luke 18 : 12), and yet the donor fall short of the true charity of the gospel, and be all the while laying up treasures for himself on earth. *Where moth and rust doth corrupt* (the same word, rendered *disfigure* in v. 16). Oriental treasures consisted principally in garments, and in gold, silver, and other precious metals. The former were liable to be injured by *moth*, the latter by *rust*. The *treasures* referred to include, however, every thing upon which the heart is fixed. But the uncertainty of these objects of earthly desire, is set forth under the imagery of apparel, laid carefully by for future use, and found afterwards destroyed by moth, and of the corroding influence of rust, or the wear or tear of time, on the valuable metals. The word rendered *rust*, signifies any thing which *eats into* and *consumes* one's property, and may therefore have a wider signification than mere *rust*. *Where thieves break through and steal*. This represents another way in which earthly treasures may disappear, and like the

moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

destructive influence of moth and rust, is figuratively employed to denote the uncertainty and sublunary character of all earthly possessions. The houses in the East, especially those of the common classes of society, were constructed of clay (Job 4 : 19), hardened in the sun or by the fire, or of loose stones, which rendered it comparatively easy for thieves to dig through the wall, and thus gain access to the room where the treasures were kept. The word rendered *break through* (literally *dig through*), is almost always used of the wall of a house thus constructed.

20. *Lay up for yourselves*, &c. Here the qualifying expression, *for yourselves*, is essential to the observance of the command. We cannot lay up treasures in heaven for others. Each person must do this for himself. There is nothing selfish in the most ardent desire for the personal enjoyment of God's favor. Indeed this is the only means of eradicating selfishness from the heart, and filling it with true benevolence. Whoever is striving to possess this heavenly treasure, will always, to a corresponding degree, be found desirous that it should be enjoyed by others. So invariably united is a personal interest in Christ, with efforts for the salvation of others, that the existence of the one implies that of the other. See Ps. 51 : 13 ; John 1 : 41-46 ; 4 : 29 ; Acts 26 : 19, 20. *Treasures in heaven*. This is to be interpreted of the spiritual rewards, reserved in heaven for the truly pious.

21. *For where your treasure is*, &c. This is the reason why treasures are to be laid up in heaven. The heart is always placed upon the governing object of pursuit. If this be earthly, the heart will be given to earthly objects. If it be heavenly, the affections will be drawn heaven-ward. The state of the heart is what gives one favor or disfavor in the sight of God.

22 "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light

u Lu. 11: 34, 35.

x Lu. 16: 13.

22. The design of this verse is to illustrate and enforce the preceding sentiment. As the eye of the body is to a man physically considered, so is the eye of reason or the mind, to the moral man. If that become diseased by being set upon worldly treasures, it does not discern heavenly things clearly, and soon becomes entirely blinded. *The light* (literally *the lamp*) of the body. As a lamp or candle is the source of light in the absence of the sun, so the eye serves to give light to the body. *If therefore thine eye be single*, i. e. in a sound healthful state, so that objects are seen distinctly, and do not appear double or confused. *Full of light*, i. e. wholly enlightened, having all the light necessary for the clear discernment of external objects.

23. *Be evil*, i. e. be in a diseased condition, so as not to present a faithful image of external things. *Thy whole body is full of darkness* (i. e. without light). This is the very opposite of the corresponding phrase in the preceding verse. *If therefore the light* (not here *the lamp*, as the natural eye was called in v. 22) *that is in thee*. Reference is had to the *mind*, the intellectual light of a man. If that be darkened by false views of the great purpose of life, how great and fatal is that darkness. Moral darkness is as much more to be dreaded than natural blindness, as the mind or soul is of more value than the body. To err in regard to the comparative value of earthly and heavenly riches, is proof that the soul is enshrouded in this fatal darkness. Some refer this inner light to the *conscience*, with this sense: "if the conscience, the eye and light of the soul, be darkened, in how much gross-

that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

24 ¶ "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

y Ga. 1: 10; 1 Ti. 6: 17; Ja. 4: 4; 1 Jo. 2: 15.

er darkness will all the passions and faculties be, which are of themselves naturally dark." Alford. But not to speak of the grammatical objection (arising from the presence of the article), against making the second "darkness" refer to something distinct and different from the first, it seems clear that the *mind*, the seat of intelligence, which decides upon the governing objects of pursuit, and which in view of that decision receives the approval or disapproval of conscience, is referred to.

24. This verse further enforces the sentiment contained in v. 21. Some might flatter themselves, that they could set their heart on riches as an intrinsic good, and yet give to God an equal, or, if necessary, a greater share of their affections. The fallacy of this is shown by the acknowledged fact, that a man cannot serve at the same time two masters. Literally, *no man can be the slave of two masters*, i. e. he cannot belong wholly and entirely to two different masters. This brings out the nature of the impossibility better than our common translation. Involuntary service is here referred to. Any other service might be rendered to various individuals, as occasion might require. *Will hate the one*, i. e. hold his authority in contempt. *And love*, i. e. yield prompt and hearty obedience. *Will hold to the one*. A strong expression, showing the fidelity and attachment of a servant to the master whom he loves. The master here referred to is the one previously supposed to be hated, so that it is not a mere repetition of the preceding proposition. *And despise*, i. e. have no regard for his person and authority. Thus clearly



25 Therefore I say unto you, <sup>a</sup> Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 55:22; Lu. 12:22,23; Phi. 4:6; 1 Pe. 5:7.

does Christ show how utterly impossible it is for a man to be under the supreme influence of two principles, so antagonistic as the love of God and love of the world. This is explicitly asserted in what follows, *ye cannot serve God and mammon*. This latter word is the Chaldaic personification of riches, like the Greek *Plutus*. Tholuck has shown clearly that Mammon was not the name of a Syrian deity, as Schleusner and others have asserted. This declaration of our Savior should be pondered upon, by all who are exposed, in these money-making days, to the worship and service of Mammon.

25-34. The train of thought in these verses, is intimately connected with what has just been said by our Lord, about the true end and purpose of life. If that be the service and glory of God, then clearly we are not to be troubled about worldly things which are of minor importance. The great end of our being is to be kept continually in view, without any interruption from the petty, distracting cares of life, which agitate and perplex those whose only portion is in this world. The beautiful and apposite illustrations, with which Jesus enforces this truth, render this one of the most interesting and striking portions of God's word.

25. *Therefore*, i. e. in view of what has just been said. *Take no thought*; literally, *be not distracted*. Our common translation gives a sense, which renders the command impossible of observance. The idea is, that we are not to be over-anxious, or solicitous about the concerns of the present life. *For your life*; literally, *soul*, but here put figuratively for *natural life*, or the wants of the body. *What ye shall eat*, &c. This is the object of solicitude referred

26 <sup>a</sup> Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

<sup>a</sup> Job 38:41; Ps. 147:9; Lu. 12:24, &c.

to in the preceding clause. *Nor yet for your body*. The sentiment is parallel with the preceding. Food sustains the life of the body, raiment keeps it warm and comfortable. These are generically put for all temporal necessities and comforts. *Is not the life more* (i. e. of more worth, importance, and dignity) *than meat*? The sentiment is: Will not God, who made the body, provide things necessary for its support? A prudent management of our temporal concerns, and a well regulated industry are not here forbidden. It is undue anxiety, and apprehension of future want, attended with distrust of God's providential care, against which our Savior warns his followers.

26. The argument of this verse is from the less to the greater. (See N. on 5:15.) If God provides for the fowls of the air, will he not much more attend to the wants of man, his noblest work? *Consider the fowls*, &c. Literally, *consider the fowls of the heaven, that they do not sow*; equivalent to, *consider that the fowls of the heaven do not sow*, &c. By *fowls* is here meant the birds. *Of the air*; literally, *of heaven*, i. e. the aerial or lower regions of the firmament above us. See N. on v. 9. Tholuck well remarks, that these words are not superfluous, but serve to show the free and uncaring condition of these birds, flying from one place to another at their pleasure. *For they sow not*, &c. They engage in no labor, like that with which man makes provision for his wants. They manifest no forethought for their sustenance, but are supported each day by the watchful care of the Being who created them. What a beautiful and appropriate illustration of God's providential care and watchfulness. It hardly need be said, that no warrant

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature ?

28 And why take ye thought for raiment ? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow ; they

for indolence can be drawn from this passage, the example of the birds being adduced only to enforce the precept laid down in v. 25. *Are ye not much better, &c.* (literally, *do ye not differ much from them.* See N. on 10 : 29), i. e. do you not greatly excel the birds, both in dignity, and in the capacity of providing for your wants ? Man is the highest in the scale of creation, and would not, therefore, be left without the means of subsistence. God has also endowed him with prudence and forethought, by the proper exercise of which he may provide for all his reasonable wants.

27. The uselessness of this immoderate anxiety is shown, by man's inability to make any change in his being or physical condition. *By taking thought,* i. e. with the most anxious thought. *One cubit.* This measure, which took its name and came into use, from the habit of measuring from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, was reckoned at  $1\frac{1}{4}$  foot, although the Greek and Roman cubit varied a little, the one above, and the other below this exact measure. *To his stature.* The context, as well as the prevailing meaning of the word, requires this to be translated *life,* or *time of one's life.* It is the design of food and clothing to prolong life, not to increase the size of the body. Besides, nothing is more common than to apply to duration of time epithets, which properly belong to the measurement of space or solid bodies. Thus we speak of an *inch of time,* the *hand's breadth of our life,* &c. See Ps. 39 : 5 ; 2 Tim. 4 : 7. Our inability to prolong life beyond the limits assigned it by God, is evidently the point upon which our Lord is enlarging.

28. Our Savior now proceeds to illustrate the folly of excessive anxiety in respect to raiment, by showing

toil not, neither do they spin ;

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-

that even to plants is granted a more gorgeous array, than was ever possessed by the richest of earthly monarchs. If to inanimate objects is granted therefore such beautiful costume, how unworthy is the desire in man to be clad in robes of splendor, when his highest efforts will not place him on a level, in this respect, with the wild plants of the field. *Consider ;* literally, *learn thoroughly, note with accuracy* as one who is a learner. *The lilies.* Reference is had, as some think, to the *crown imperial ;* others suppose that the *amaryllis lutea,* "whose liliaceous golden flowers cover the autumnal fields of the Levant" (Alford), is meant. Other species of the lily family are named by different travellers and writers, as claiming the distinction here given by our Lord. *Of the field.* Not those of the flower-garden, cultivated by the care of man, but growing in the common field, watched over by no eye, but that of the Being who gave them such robes of beauty. *How they grow.* This is not interrogative but relative, *in what manner they grow.* *They toil not, &c.* They do nothing to ensure the perfection of beauty which they reach.

29. *Even Solomon, &c.* This monarch was celebrated, throughout the Oriental world, for his glory and magnificence. No higher example of human splendor could have been selected, with which to compare the gorgeous robes of the lily. The argument is one of surpassing beauty, and the influence such, as should cause all misgivings of God's watchful care and providence, to cease for ever.

30. *So clothe in garments of beauty.* *The grass of the field.* These splendid lilies ranked only with the common grass or herbage of the field, blooming for a day, and then perhaps cut down by the scythe and cast into the fire.

day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek :) for your

heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But <sup>b</sup> seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought

<sup>b</sup> See 1 Ki. 3: 13; Ps. 37: 25; Ma. 10: 30; Lu. 12: 31; 1 Ti. 4: 8.

How this enhances the argument of our Lord, in reasoning from God's care of such short-lived, evanescent flowers to man, whom he has endowed with reason and made immortal. The unrivalled beauty in which objects so inferior to him are clothed, is designed to teach him that he has a nobler destiny, and that his anxiety for dress and equipage, is unworthy of his birthright of immortality. *To-morrow.* Not absolutely the next day, as ordinarily the grass would be too green, to answer the purpose for which it was cast into the oven. Future time near at hand is designated, and in this indefinite sense, we often use the term. *Oven.* A large, round, earthen pot, conical in shape, and two or three feet high, upon the heated sides of which the dough was spread in thin cakes, and thus baked. *O ye of little faith.* This is said in reference to the distrust in God's watchful care, which causes the anxiety and care here condemned.

31. *Therefore take no thought, &c.* An emphatic repetition of the injunction in v. 25, presented here in the form of an inference.

32. *For after all these things, &c.* An additional reason is here given, why the followers of Christ should not be anxious in respect to the supply of their temporal wants. These are the things which constitute the chief good in the estimation of the heathen, who have no correct views of the providence and government of God. Another reason is contained in the next clause: *For your heavenly Father, &c.* A most precious declaration, which should dispel all gloom and apprehension respecting the future, and in the darkest hour,

cheer us with the reflection, that God knows our condition and wants, and will not overlook us in the distribution of his mercies.

33. *But seek ye first.* Make this the first and principal object of your efforts and desires. *The kingdom of God, i. e.* an interest in the promised blessings of the Messiah's reign. *His righteousness, i. e.* the possession of piety, godliness, vital religion, without which no one can share in the blessings of Christ's kingdom. Alford well remarks, that the *righteousness of justification* is not here meant, but the *spiritual purity* inculcated in this discourse. *All these things shall be added, &c.* This does not imply that the possession of grace in the heart, will ensure the supply of temporal wants without personal exertion. But it constitutes a great promise, that God will not forsake those who put their trust in Him, and though for wise reasons he may sorely try their faith and constancy, yet he will prove faithful to his word, and deliver them from all their troubles. *All these things;* literally, *these things—all* (of them), the emphasis being on *all*. The promise is therefore very full and explicit. The possession of the grace of God includes every minor blessing.

34. *Take no thought, &c.* An emphatic repetition of the sentiment in vs. 25, 31. *The morrow, i. e.* the future. See N. on v. 30. *For the morrow, &c.* The sentiment is, that God who supplies our daily wants, will provide for the wants of the future. It hardly need be said, that neither the spirit nor letter of this passage, forbids our making suitable provision for future wants. The duty of reliance upon God, and the banish-

for the morrow : for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

ment of corroding care and anxiety in respect to the future supply of our necessities, is what is manifestly taught in this part of our Lord's discourse. The expression, *take no thought* in this verse, is used in two different senses. In the first clause, it has the sense, *be not anxious* ; in the second, *shall provide for, take care for*. The morrow is said to take care for its own wants, to express in a striking manner, that he who is "the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever," will as readily grant us needed blessings on the morrow, or any subsequent period, as at the present moment. Alford explains the latter clause differently ; "the morrow will bring care enough about its own matters." But this idea is contained in the proverbial sentence which follows, and which constitutes a second reason against undue anxiety respecting the future. The exposition of Alford would make our Savior utter a flat tautology. *Sufficient unto the day, &c.* This is a proverbial expression against the anticipation of future evil, inasmuch as each day brings its own proportion of trials, and we ought not to add to them by borrowing future trouble. *Evil.* Here *trouble, care*, forming a part of the evils and afflictions of life.

This chapter is replete with the most important instructions and exalted sentiments. Great principles are laid down in respect to the discharge of religious duties, the forgiveness of injuries, the danger of amassing wealth, anxiety respecting temporal wants, which are so plain and easy of application, that no one can be at loss in applying the truth to his own heart and conscience. Religious ostentation, an implacable and revengeful temper, love of riches, a divided heart in the service of God, an anxious, fretful state of mind in regard to the future, are all forbidden ; while, on the other hand,

## CHAPTER VII.

**J**UDGE "not, that ye be not judged.

2 For with what judgment ye  
a Lu. 6 : 37 ; Ro. 2 : 1, & 14 : 3, 4, 10, 13 ; 1 Co.  
4 : 3, 5 ; Ja. 4 : 11, 12.

a cheerful and religious frame, freedom from all parade in the discharge of duty, secret communion with God, Christian forgiveness, and a calm, holy reliance upon divine providence, are all enjoined upon us in the most impressive manner.

## CHAPTER VII.

In this chapter our Lord continues to caution his disciples against common and prevalent errors, and instructs them in regard to the duties of judging leniently and impartially, of fervent and importunate prayer, of resolution and perseverance in the ways of religion, and closes by enjoining upon all a practical regard for his precepts.

1. *Judge not.* Be not censorious, nor hasty to form an unfavorable judgment in regard to the conduct of others. This is not a prohibition against all judgment, as is clear from John 7 : 24 ; 1 Cor. 6 : 5. *That ye be not judged* with like severity. This may refer to the judgment of our fellow men, often provoked to severity by the censorious spirit we manifest, so that we receive like for like ; or it may refer in a higher sense to God's judgment, which shall fall heavily upon such as are censorious critics of others. Perhaps both these senses are to be given it, as both are unquestionably true. The additional direction in Luke 6 : 37, "condemn not and ye shall not be condemned," shows clearly that the spirit here rebuked is a censorious one, which leads to rash and unfavorable decisions respecting the character and motives of acts. *That* (in order that) denotes the end or purpose of what precedes. Some erroneously interpret it, *so that*, as denoting the result.

2. *For with* (i. e. according to) *what judgment, &c.* This illustrates and confirms the preceding assertion. They who show no mercy (James 2 : 13),



judge, ye shall be judged : <sup>b</sup> and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

3 <sup>c</sup> And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote

<sup>b</sup> Ma. 4:24; Lu. 6:38.    <sup>c</sup> Lu. 6:41, 42.

must expect judgment without mercy, on the principle of equity. *With what measure ye mete* (i. e. measure out to others). The same sentiment in a varied form. The administration of justice, in its most full and unmitigated form, is often figuratively expressed as something *measured out* in full completion. There is no doubt that our Savior here made use of a proverbial expression.

3. *And why* (literally, *but why*)? denotes surprise at the sharp-sightedness with which the faults of others are detected, in view of the great principle, *like for like*, referred to in vs. 1, 2. *Beholdest* with the outward eye, as *considerest* refers to the mental eye by which we discern our own faults. *The mote*. A small particle of chaff, or here, as opposed to *beam*, a very small twig, a splinter. These figuratively represent the small faults, which we are quick to detect in others, and the great ones, which are unobserved in ourselves.

4. *Or how* (with consistency) *wilt thou* (i. e. canst thou) *say*? See Luke 7:42. The argument is still illustrative of vs. 1, 2. *Thy brother*. Thy fellow man. See N. on 5:22. *Let me pull out*; literally, *suffer or permit that I cast out*, words naturally used by one, who wishes to remove some irritating substance from the eye of another. *And behold a beam* (i. e. while at the same time a beam) *is in thine own eye*. This shows how inconsistent was the act proposed to be done.

5. *First cast out the beam*, &c. Rectify thine own faults. *And then shalt thou see clearly* (i. e. with perfect and

out of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

6 ¶ <sup>d</sup> Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast

<sup>d</sup> Pr. 9:7, 8, & 23:9; Ac. 13:45, 46.

unobstructed vision). One who amends his own ways, is qualified to correct the conduct of others. It is worthy of note, that self-correction and reformation are not here followed by a mere staring or gazing at the faults of others, as in v. 3, but by a desire to assist an erring brother in getting rid of whatever is wrong. This desire is now practicable. But for an unreformed man to undertake to reform others, is always looked upon as an impertinent and odious interference. Such a person is also disqualified for the duty of a reformer, by his self-ignorance and want of self-discipline. How can one kindly and judiciously administer reproof to others, who has never seriously set about the correction of his own faults, nay, who is too self-righteous, to admit that he has any imperfections? But let him learn humility, by seeing and acknowledging before God and his fellow men his own sins, and he becomes fitted at once to be a kind and faithful monitor to others.

6. *Give not that which is holy*, &c. The interpretation of this verse and its precise application, is attended with some difficulty. Of the various explanations, however, none appears to answer to the grammatical construction and the sense demanded by the context, better than that contained in the following paraphrase: Give not that which is holy to the dogs, lest they being disappointed in obtaining their expected food, should turn upon and rend you; neither cast pearls before swine, lest they also expecting food and getting none, should trample them under their feet. Alford and some others

ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

refer both these acts of violence to the swine, who being infuriated at their disappointment in not finding these pearls to be acorns, which they resembled, trample them under their feet, and turn against the donor to rend him with their tusks. The injunction against giving that which is holy to the dogs, is derived from Levit. 22 : 6, 7 ; 10 : 14, where no unclean person, or stranger or sojourner, was to eat of the holy things. Much less was that which was holy, (here the meat offered in sacrifice), to be profaned by being cast to dogs. As the dogs would not refuse this meat, there seems to be some reason, with Alford, in limiting the acts of violence to the swine, making the similitudes slightly different, the former being against the profanation of sacred things, the latter, against infuriating savage animals, by giving them that which has the appearance of food, but which is not such, nor adapted to their wants and desires. To whichever interpretation we incline, they are so essentially alike, that the same general principle can be deduced from either. We are to study the characters of those whom we attempt to reform, and wisely adapt our instruction and reproof to their physical and moral condition. There may be instances, in which men become so hardened and so abusive under reproof, as to render useless all attempts for their reformation. We are to waste neither our time or energies on such brutal and profane persons, whom our Lord well likens to ferocious dogs; nor are we to cast the pearls of religious truth to profligate and abandoned men, who may with equal propriety be termed swine. This appears to be the sentiment, which the context gives to this remarkable verse. The connection is very strongly marked: Attempt the correction of no one's faults, until you have first aimed at correcting your own. And in the cor-

7 ¶ Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find;

Ch. 21:22; Ma. 11:24; Lu. 11:9, 10, & 18:1; John 14:13, & 15:7, & 16:23, 24; Ja. 1:5, 6; 1 Jo. 3:22, & 5:14, 15.

rection of others, there is a limit resulting from the more aggravated forms of sin and vice, beyond which it is no one's duty to go. Some think that Jesus has reference to admission to his visible church, and that he here forbids his ministers and people to receive into membership, those who are devoted to the indulgence of their carnal and unholy appetites (see Bib. Repos. 2d ser. vol. xii. p. 168). But this interpretation so entirely overlooks the demands of the preceding context, that it cannot be admitted as the true one. Some expositors are drawn away from the right interpretation of the passage, through fear that the principle laid down may be abused, and may furnish a shelter for a timid forbearance to speak the truth, when there is the least danger of opposition. But the rule, properly interpreted and applied, admits of no such shrinking from the bold discharge of duty. It simply refers to the line of conduct to be observed, when we come in contact with such vile and polluted beings, as are sometimes found in almost every community. "For such men the law alone is fit. The gospel they misunderstand to the injury of those who proclaim it to them." Olshausen.

7. The connection here may be seen, by supposing the hearer to mentally exclaim: If that which is holy is not to be given to the dogs, and if pearls are not to be thrown to swine, what hope is there for man, so infinitely unworthy of the divine mercy? In reference to such an inquiry, our Lord proceeds to unfold the readiness of God, to bestow his favors upon such as humbly and devoutly implore them. *Ask and it shall be given you, &c.* This refers primarily and principally to spiritual blessings, which will never be refused to the humble repentant applicant. It does not follow, however, that God will answer our prayer, in the time and

knock, and it shall be opened unto you :

8 For <sup>f</sup> every one that asketh, receiveth ; and he that seeketh, findeth ; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

9 <sup>g</sup> Or what man is there of *f* Pr. 8:17; Je. 29:12, 13. *g* Lu. 11:11, 12, 13.

way which to us seem best. He knows far better than we, what is conducive to our highest good. But the promise in this and the following verse, has no limitation, and we may feel the highest confidence, that prayer, offered in the right spirit, will receive an answer, which in the end will be seen to be just such, as our chief and ultimate good required. We should therefore cheerfully leave the time and manner of the answer to prayer with Him, who has made the promise, and to which He will ever prove faithful. In respect to what is called the prayer of faith, see N. on 21 : 22. The repetition of the words *ask, seek,* and *knock,* gives great emphasis and fullness to the promise.

8. *For every one that asketh, &c.* In illustration of the promise just made, our Lord appeals to a common and well-known fact. Men act on the expectation, that what they earnestly ask for and seek after, they will obtain, and this expectation is generally realized. In the experience of praying Christians, it is eminently true. They have so often been made sensible that God hears, and answers prayer, that it becomes the language of their experience, "every one that asketh receiveth."

9. An argument in proof of God's readiness to grant suitable, spiritual blessings to his people, is here drawn from the conduct of parents to their children. This is the argument *ad hominem*. See N. on 12 : 12. *Or.* This particle introduces the question, as a kind of denial of what precedes. But the question implies a negative, being equivalent to, *there is no man of you, whom if his son, &c.* So Olshausen : "or does it ever happen otherwise?" Hence it serves to confirm the senti-

ment of the preceding verse. *What man is there of you?* Is there a single man of those whom I now address?

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent ?

11 If ye then <sup>h</sup> being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall

*h* Ge. 6:5, & 18:21.

ment of the preceding verse. *What man is there of you?* Is there a single man of those whom I now address? Doddridge gives it this shade : "which of you is there, though but a man?" which is a slight departure from the original.

*Would he give him a stone?* Would he be so unnatural, as to withhold bread from his hungry child, and give him that which was not food? Would he not seek to adapt his gift to the urgent and perishing need of his child? Here is a limitation to the promise made in vs. 7, 8. God will not grant even to our most urgent solicitations, that which is unsuited to our condition. If we in our blindness ask, as we think, for bread, but in reality for something unsuited to our wants, as a stone would be to a starving child, God will answer the spirit of our prayer, but deny us the thing for which we blindly asked Him. Thus this passage teaches not only the readiness of God to grant needed blessings, but his wise adaptation of them to our wants, and his care not to grant any request of his children, which would prove hurtful to them, or not promotive of their best interests.

10. *Will he give him a serpent?* Something that would do him positive injury instead of sustaining life? The interrogative form is employed to express a strong negation. Hence our Lord proceeds to draw the inference contained in the next verse, without asserting in so many words that no parent would thus treat his beloved child. The question could receive no other than a negative response in the heart of every one present.

11. The sentiment is: If ye then, being but partially or imperfectly possessed with benevolent feelings, know

your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him ?

12 Therefore all things <sup>i</sup> whatsoever ye would that men should

<sup>i</sup> Lu. 6 : 31.

how to treat with tenderness your children, how much more shall an infinitely benevolent Being be compassionate towards his spiritual children. *Being evil*, i. e. imperfect, not free from moral imperfections. This is true of the most holy men that have ever lived. See Ecces. 7 : 20. Augustine's remark must not be forgotten, that the persons now addressed are the same, who have just been taught to say, *Our Father*. The expression has reference, therefore, to the general corruption of their nature, which even when renewed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, is only partially so, while they are yet in this world. Stier remarks, that this is one of the strongest proofs of original sin to be found in the Holy Scriptures. *Know how*, i. e. have the disposition. *Good gifts*. Things necessary for their comfort. *How much more*. There never was an instance where the argument *a fortiori* (see N. on 5 : 15) was employed in a more striking manner, than in this passage, unless perhaps in Rom. 5 : 10, where the same superabundance of God's grace in his Son, over man's unworthiness, is the theme of the discourse. The love and tender care, with which an earthly parent watches over his child, bears no conceivable proportion to that love, which our Heavenly Father feels for his obedient, believing children. *To them that ask him*. Prayer is the means by which God's people obtain the blessings he has in store for them. Even if this were otherwise, it should be regarded as an inestimable privilege to address the Deity, in prayer, and to call him *our Father in heaven*. But how much more should we prize this privilege, connected, as prayer is, with the richest blessings the human mind can conceive.

12. The sentiment of this verse is so

Vol. I.—4

do to you, do ye even so to them : for <sup>k</sup> this is the law and the prophets.

13 ¶ <sup>l</sup> Enter ye in at the strait gate : for wide <sup>is</sup> the gate, and

<sup>k</sup> Le. 19 : 18 ; ch. 22 : 40 ; Ro. 13 : 8, 9, 10 ; Ga. 5 : 14 ; 1 Ti. 1 : 5. <sup>l</sup> Lu. 13 : 24.

heavenly, and so unlike the teachings of heathen moralists, that it has by common consent been denominated THE GOLDEN RULE. It is an inference from the whole of the preceding portion of the chapter, yet more immediately from the latter part of the preceding verse, as it enjoins upon us the imitation of our Heavenly Father, in the exercise of love, and acts of kindness to all our fellow-men. If we would hope to secure the love and favor of God, and receive mercy at his hands, we must ourselves exercise a like spirit towards all, who may come within the reach of our influence.

*Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you*, i. e. regard as reasonable and proper to be done, were you in their circumstances and they in yours. *For this is the law and the prophets* (see N. on 5 : 17). The whole spirit of the law and prophetic writings of the Old Testament, is contained in this one great principle of treating others, as in like circumstances we would wish to be treated. How different would be the state of society, did men act in accordance with this rule.

13. Cautions against false teachers, and the necessity of obedience to the requisitions of the gospel, are now urged by our Lord upon the attention of his hearers. This occupies the remainder of the discourse. *Enter ye in at the strait gate*. The entrance to the Christian course, or, perhaps more properly, the entrance into the kingdom of heaven, by a life of self-denial and active obedience, is here figuratively represented by crowding one's self through a very narrow side-gate into an edifice. In the Table of Cebes, there is a remarkably similar expression, "Do you not see a certain small door to which a path leads, not much thronged as very few travel it ? that is the way



broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat :

14 Because, strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

*m* De. 13:3; Je. 23:16; ch. 24:4, 5, 11, 24; Ma. 13:22; Ro. 16:17, 18; Ep. 5:6; Col. 2:8 2; Pe. 2:1, 2, 3; 1 Jo. 4:1.

which leads to true mental culture." *For wide is the gate.* The ease and luxury of self-indulgence, here represented by the wide gate and broad way, are given as a reason, why men should strive to enter in at the strait gate. See Luke 13:24, where we have that remarkable direction: "Strive (literally, *agonize*) to enter in at the strait gate." *Many there be which go in thereat.* All pass thoughtlessly along. The gate is wide. There is no crowding or jostling among the multitudes, who sweep through its portals. A broad and inviting way lies before them. Thousands upon thousands are walking therein, in all the wanton joyousness of sensual ease and indulgence. Who would think of squeezing through a small and obscure gate, and treading a narrow path, with this broad gate and way full in sight, along which his fellow-men were passing in countless numbers?

14. *Because strait* (i. e. narrow) *is the gate.* This verse contains the reason why so many enter the wide gate, and why the avenue is so broad. The only remaining way is so narrow and obscure, that few enter it or even find it. A different reading in the original is adopted by some editors, which would make the passage intensive: *How strait, or how greatly strait, &c.* In that case the verse loses its causal sense, and is to be regarded as an enforcement of the direction in v. 13. *Narrow*; literally, *crushed in, compressed* in width. A very strong expression. *Few there be, &c.* The eye of the approaching traveller is fastened upon the broad and imposing gate. The narrow side-entrance is unnoticed. A few draw near and press through it, but are re-

15 ¶ <sup>m</sup> Beware of false prophets, <sup>n</sup> which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are <sup>o</sup> ravening wolves.

16 <sup>p</sup> Ye shall know them by their fruits. <sup>q</sup> Do men gather

*n* Mi. 3:5; 2 Ti. 3:5. *o* Ac. 20:29, 30.  
*p* Ver. 20; ch. 12:33. *q* Lu. 6:43, 44.

garded by the masses as insane, to choose so narrow and rugged a path.

15. *Beware* (literally, *but beware*) *of false prophets* or false teachers, deceiving guides (see 24:24). The difficulty in finding the strait gate, naturally suggests the idea of guides, who would proffer their services to point it out, and give directions as to the best manner of entrance. But unfortunately among these are found many, who are themselves ignorant of the way, and make it their object to deceive all who trust themselves to their guidance. *Come to you* as guides and teachers. *In sheep's clothing*, i. e. having the external appearance of innocence and uprightness, clad in the robes of God's spiritual flock. Sheep have ever been regarded as the emblem of harmlessness and innocence. *But inwardly*, in heart and disposition. *Ravening wolves.* The very opposite of their counterfeit innocence. The rapacious, cruel, deceitful character here given to false teachers, has been possessed by many professed ministers of Christ, especially by the Romish hierarchy (2 Pet. 2:1). It was also pre-eminently the character of the Pharisees in the time of Christ. No greater curse can be inflicted on a religious community, than false, ungodly, and rapacious teachers.

16. *Ye shall know them* (i. e. learn their true character) *by their fruits.* Their corrupt doctrines and profligate lives will show how worthless are their professions of piety. Men of the most consummate address and power of dissimulation, when thrown from their guard by some sudden and unexpected occurrence, often betray themselves by intemperate acts and expressions, so that

grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth

r Je. 11:19; ch. 12:33. s ch. 3:10; Lu. 3:9; John 15:2, 6.

their real character is made manifest. The guise of hypocrisy will sooner or later be seen through. Sin brings forth its own fruit, which in the light of truth cannot be mistaken for the fruit of holiness. This great fact is brought out more distinctly in the next clause.

*Do men gather grapes of thorns?* &c. It was as reasonable to expect clusters of grapes upon a thorn-bush, or figs upon thistles, as the fruits of holiness from men of a bad character. Ols-hausen refers *thorns* to what is called *buck-thorn*, with fruits like grapes but disagreeable. So *thistles*, he suggests, may be the *Opuntien cactus* (Indian fig tree), which produces fruit similar to the fig, but worthless. Our Lord often draws his similitudes from the objects of nature. Nothing could be more expressive than the illustration here made use of. Tholuck understands *doctrines* by the term fruits. But while these are included, it is better to make the expression more comprehensive, embracing all the moral acts of a man which bring out his true character.

17, 18. *Even so*, i. e. in accordance with the law of nature, *that like produces like*. *Every good tree*, &c. If these religious teachers are what they profess to be, they will be characterized by moral purity, devotion to the cause of truth, forgiveness of injuries, a zealous interest in the welfare of others. These are the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), which do not grow and ripen in a corrupt heart. *But a corrupt tree*, &c. The same principle applies to false and wicked teachers. The fruit will

not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them.

21 ¶ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that

t Ho. 8:2; ch. 25:11, 12; Lu. 6:46, & 13:25; Ac. 19:13; Ro. 2:13; Ja. 1:22.

conform to the nature of the tree. Whatever may be their outward profession, if their conduct belies it, they are entitled to no claim to genuine piety. *Corrupt*, i. e. decayed, rotten. *A good tree cannot*, &c. See 12:33-35, where the same sentiment, under a slightly varied form, is again brought forward. This verse is an emphatic repetition of v. 17, the sentiment being expressed in a negative form.

19. From the common use for fuel, to which old and decayed trees are put, our Lord in these verses pronounces the dreadful doom of hypocritical teachers, and all others, who put on a false garb to lead men astray.

20. *Wherefore by their fruits*, &c. A general inference from the foregoing illustration, as well as an emphatic repetition of what was declared in v. 16. *Ye shall know*; literally, *ye shall thoroughly know*.

21. From pronouncing the doom of false teachers, our Lord proceeds to show that a practical regard for his precepts, and not a mere profession of his name, will entitle one to admission into his kingdom. Thus the doom of all hypocrites, is declared in the most solemn and striking terms. *Not every one*, i. e. it is not every person who addresses me with Lord, Lord, that shall enter, &c. There are some who, from a humble and contrite spirit, utter the name of their Lord. These constitute an exception to the exclusion from heaven here referred to. Otherwise our Savior would have said, *every one that saith Lord, Lord*, &c. It is not

day, Lord, Lord, have we "not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils?"

u Nu. 24:4; Jo. 11:51; 1 Co. 13:2.

against their calling him *Lord*, that he inveighs, but the hollow-heartedness of this outward homage, unattended as it was with an obedient humble spirit. *Kingdom of heaven*, i. e. the place of future blessedness. *But he (only) that doeth the will*, i. e. the commands and precepts.

22. *Many will say, &c.* The day of final account is here referred to, in which our Lord declares in no ambiguous terms, that he is to be the principal personage. Whether the people, on this occasion, understood him as claiming the office of final Judge, is quite doubtful. Many things which he uttered that are plain to us, were to them obscure, blinded as they were by the prejudices of their nation in favor of a temporal Messiah. *Lord, Lord.* The repetition denotes the earnestness of their appeal, and their professed respect for his dignity and authority. *Have we not prophesied in thy name?* i. e. imparted religious instruction, as thy authorized ministers. Foretelling future events is not necessarily implied in the term (see 1 Cor. 12:10), for it includes all the varieties of religious teaching. *In thy name cast out devils.* These were deceived souls, who imagined that they had performed miracles. No wicked persons ever performed miracles voluntarily, as was done by the true servants of God, but only as they were instrumentally used to do this, by a power which they could not resist, and contrary to their will and expectation. Balaam was forced to prophesy good concerning Israel, contrary to his own wish, and that of the king of Moab (Num. 23:20, 26; 24:13). The witch of Endor was overwhelmed with astonishment, when she saw that she had actually called up the spirit of Samuel. This shows that she had no expectation of such an event, and proves most conclusively that she did not raise him, but that God took that opportunity to let

and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And "then will I profess

æ Ch. 25:12; Lu. 13:25, 27; 2 Ti. 2:19.

Saul know his approaching doom, through the spirit of Samuel, whom he was so impiously evoking from the repose of the grave. The magicians of Egypt practised legerdemain, which was successful in two or three of the first miracles or plagues, which admitted of a sort of imitation by expert jugglers, but they soon gave over and confessed their impotence (Ex. 8:18, 19; 9:11). We have no evidence that Judas ever performed a miracle. It is said of the Twelve whom Jesus sent forth, that he gave them power over unclean spirits (Mark 6:7), and that they cast out many devils (Mark 6:13). It is not asserted or necessarily implied, that every individual of the number ejected evil spirits. They went forth two by two (Mark 6:7), and at no time, probably during the time of public instruction, was Judas by himself, so that we could affirm of him that he personally wrought miracles, as did the other apostles. But even if Judas had this power, and exercised it, his case could only be regarded as an exception, resulting from his being for a time one of the chosen apostles of Christ, and endowed thereby with an honor, of which he was personally undeserving. As to what our Lord said (12:27) about the ejection of demons by the children of the Pharisees, he refers to what they pretended to do, and not to an actual fact. On the nature of his argument, see N. on that passage. The word of God does not, therefore, justify us in believing that these self-deceived persons ever cast out devils, as they pretended to have done, and in many instances thought they did. *Many wonderful works*, i. e. miracles. See N. on 11:21. In claiming this power, they also spoke falsely. One great arm of the argument, that the writers of the Old and New Testaments were what they professed to be, servants and messengers of God, was their power to work miracles. But this

unto them, I never knew you: <sup>y</sup> depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

24 ¶ Therefore, <sup>z</sup> whosoever

<sup>y</sup> Ps. 5 : 5, & 6 : 8 ; ch. 25 : 41.

ceases to be an evidence of their divine mission, if it be admitted that wicked men have voluntarily performed miracles. See Jer. 27 : 9, 10 ; 29 : 8 ; 2 Cor. 11 : 13 ; 2 Tim. 3 : 13, in all which passages, and others which might be quoted, these wicked prophets and jugglers are regarded as deceivers both of themselves and others. How could this be, if they had the same credentials of their being sent of God, which the true prophet and teacher possessed, in his endowment with miraculous powers? Olshausen (on 8 : 1) maintains that "the Scriptures assert not merely holy, but also evil power, to be the cause of miracles. Two series of miracles [one divine, the other satanic] extend throughout Scripture history." But his reasoning in proof of this is confused, and far from being conclusive.

23. *Will I profess*, i. e. declare openly before the assembled universe. "*I will tell them the plain truth*, as opposed to their false coloring and self-deceit." Alford. They had deceived themselves and their fellow-men, with their apparent sanctity and power to do wonderful things. Now at the bar of judgment, their false and flimsy covering was to be torn off, and their true character publicly exposed. *I never knew you*. I never recognized or acknowledged you as my accredited servants and ambassadors. This shows that they had never known Christ, in the spiritual sense here intended, and had received no power from him to work miracles, and were therefore impostors. He had never approved of their doings. They had always been strangers to him, and had acted on their own authority and responsibility. *Depart from me*. See 25 : 41. *That work iniquity*, i. e. are guilty of iniquitous practices. This is put in strong contrast with their professions of zeal and activity in his service. Their prophesyings and pretended miracles were all

heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock :

<sup>z</sup> Lu. 6 : 47, &c.

acts of impiety and wickedness. The wonderful works, which they urged as a claim to favor, are thus shown to be far different from the miracles wrought by men of God, and by divine power.

24. The practical conclusion of this sublime discourse is enforced by a similitude, drawn from the selection of a site for the building of a house. The Jews built in the ravines of mountains and hills, by the side of streams of water, which, when swollen by freshets, became raging torrents, wearing away the banks on either side, as the force of the stream, by some obstruction, was diverted from its main channel. In such cases, if the house was erected close by the stream, and on a sandy foundation, it would gradually be undermined and overthrown. But if the site was farther from the stream, and the foundation of rock, instead of sand, no such disaster could take place. The improvident and indolent would be apt to select the sandy beach of the stream for their dwelling, which could there be erected with less labor, a fit representation of those who thoughtlessly and indolently neglect the duties of religion. On the other hand, they who with a wise forecast laid the foundations of their houses on a rock, aptly represented those persons who obey the truth, and conform their lives to its requisitions. *Whosoever heareth, I will liken him*. An emphatic grammatical arrangement for, *I will liken every one who heareth*, &c. *These sayings*, i. e. the words he had just been speaking. This binds the whole Sermon on the Mount together, as a continuous discourse. It was not made up of fragmentary discourses, pronounced on different occasions, but was one single address. Some of its sentiments were, however, repeated in other connections. *Wise*, i. e. prudent, provident. *A rock*; literally, *the rock* of which the mountains and hills,



25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a

foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

28 And it came to pass when

through which these torrents ran, were composed. So *the sand* (v. 26) refers to the sand along the banks of the streams, washed down and deposited from the mountains and hills above. The houses of the wise were built upon the sides of these elevations, either in natural excavations, or such as were artificially made for the purpose.

25. *The rain—the floods—the winds.* These words take the article, because they are the common and well-known elements, which test the stability of a house. Emphasis is also given them by it, as though our Lord had said, *the great fall of rain—the deeply swollen torrent—the violent wind* (see N. on 8: 12). The Greek language is remarkable for the shades of meaning given to words by the article, which the literal translation into English often fails to fully express. *Floods*; literally *rivers*, expressive of the torrents swollen by the rains. *The winds blew.* The winds sweep through the valleys of the mountains and hills of Palestine with great fury. Unless a house was well founded and constructed, it could not stand this combined force of winds and waters. *Beat upon that house.* The rushing waters could not reach the house, built, as it was, upon the slope of the mountain, at a safe and convenient distance from its base. They were said, therefore, to *beat upon* it, because they dashed against its rocky foundation. The winds of course struck it with equal violence, as though it had been built in the vale below. *Was founded*; literally, *had been founded.* The foundation must be laid against the approaching storm. It will be too late to do this, when the clouds begin to gather round the horizon.

26. *Foolish.* Not possessed of prudence or forethought. *Which built his house.* There was an outward resemblance in the structure erected by these foolish men, to that of the good. All build their hopes of future happiness on some foundation. But here the resemblance ceases. One class found their hopes on the rock of salvation; the other repose on a sandy foundation, which will be swept away in the storms of the judgment. *Upon the sand*, i. e. upon the sandy vale, where a building could be more easily constructed, and be also near the stream of water. All this beautifully represents those, who, for the gratification of their carnal desires and love of ease, neglect to found their happiness on obedience to the claims of the gospel.

27. *Great was the fall of it.* The destruction of the house was complete, and more remarkable from its pretensions to great beauty and strength. The broken portions were all carried away in the impetuous stream, and nothing was left but the naked sand. Thus is shadowed forth the awful doom of those, who make no provisions against the tempests of the last day.

28. *When Jesus had ended, &c.* Here again (see N. on v. 24) it is clearly shown that the Sermon on the Mount was one continuous discourse, and that the portions detailed by the other Evangelists, are to be considered as repetitions on the part of Christ of some of its precepts and instructions. *These sayings*, i. e. this discourse. *The people.* See N. on 5: 1. *Were astonished*, i. e. were filled with wonder and admiration. It was not strange that the discourse had this effect upon them. Even those at the present time who

Jesus had ended these sayings, <sup>a</sup> the people were astonished at his doctrine :

29 <sup>b</sup> For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes.

*a* Ch. 18 : 54 ; *Ma.* 1 : 22, & 6 : 2 ; *Lu.* 4 : 32.

have been instructed from their very childhood, in the nature and duties of true religion, and have attained to clear views of the extent and sanctity of the divine requirements, cannot read it, without feeling as if they were gazing at some great mountain of truth, having its foundation in God's law as revealed to man, and towering upward, until its summit is lost in a blaze of heavenly glory. It is a most wondrous discourse, whether viewed in relation to its external or internal qualities. The simplicity and clearness of the diction, the natural and logical connection of its parts, the pungency, and at the same time the tenderness, with which the claims of God's law are laid down and enforced, the grand climax to which Jesus gradually comes, in asserting that, humble and despised as he then was, the time would be, when as Lord and Judge of the universe, he should say to his enemies, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity," and his sublime conclusion, in respect to the practical obedience, which all should render to his words, constitute an assemblage of wonders, at which the people, who had never heard such sentiments, might well be astonished. *At his doctrine*, i. e. the truths which he had uttered, as a religious teacher.

29. *He taught them* ; literally, *was teaching*, or *had been teaching them*. *As one having power* (to teach), i. e. with divine authority. The words seemed to come as from the mouth of God himself. Indeed it was *Emmanuel, God-man*, who thus addressed them, although they then knew it not. "He spoke as himself the source of knowledge, and the authoritative expounder of duty." Kendrick on Olshausen. How striking the contrast between those precepts

## CHAPTER VIII.

**W**HEN he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

2 <sup>a</sup> And behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying,

*b* *Jn.* 7 : 46. *a* *Ma.* 1 : 40, &c. ; *Lu.* 5 : 12, &c.

and injunctions, uttered in tones of deep solemnity, and the puerile sentiments and frivolous teachings of the scribes and Pharisees, to which they had hitherto been accustomed to listen. The people came down from that Mount of Beatitudes, with such new and awakened interest in spiritual religion, that, in many instances at least, they never submitted themselves again to those blind guides. How many were led to forsake all for Christ, under the influence of this sermon, we have no means of knowing. But we doubt not, that numbers were so wrought upon by the convicting, subduing, and quickening influences of God's Spirit, accompanying the word thus spoken by God's Son, that from that time onward, they were travellers in the narrow path which leads to life everlasting.

## CHAPTER VIII.

1. Alford remarks, that "we have now in this and the following chapter, as it were, a solemn procession of miracles, confirming the authority with which our Lord had spoken." So Olshausen : "After this portraiture of Jesus as a teacher, Matthew proceeds to describe him as a *worker of miracles*." *When* (literally and when) *he was come down*, &c. The numbers of those who descended with him, were swelled by accessions, after they reached the plain. What were *multitudes* in 5 : 1 ; 7 : 28, are now *great multitudes* or crowds of people, who had assembled from every quarter.

2-4 THE HEALING OF THE LEPER. *Galilee*. *Mark* 1 : 40-45 ; *Luke* 5 : 12-16.

The healing of the leper is placed by our best harmonists, with the miracles referred to in 4 : 23-25. Alford, however, remarks that "the plain assertion

Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

of the account in the text, requires that the leper should have met our Lord, on his descent from the mountain, while great multitudes were following him." So also Trench: "As he was descending from the mountain there came a leper," &c. Both these expositors seem to lose sight of the obvious connection of v. 1, with the preceding chapters, and the commencement in v. 2, of a new and independent transaction. *A leper.* The etymological signification of this word, is *scaly, scabby*, from the appearance of the skin of one diseased with leprosy. This disease, which was quite common in the East, was so repulsive and difficult of cure, that it was generally regarded as a special infliction of the divine displeasure. There were four kinds of leprosy. In one form of its appearance, it was so severe as to separate the joints and limbs, and mutilate the body in the most awful manner. A second form was the white leprosy; a third, the black; and the fourth, the red leprosy. It began with spots about the nose and eyes, small as the punctures of a needle, which gradually enlarged and spread, until they covered the whole body, producing great physical and mental debility, and causing such dreadful misery, that it might well be called a living death. The disease is hereditary, being transmitted to the third and sometimes to the fourth generation. Dr. Jahn remarks, that it is also communicated by much intercourse with the leprous person, and that to prevent this, Moses made the laws concerning the inspection and separation of those afflicted with the disease. This dreadful and loathsome malady is often employed by the sacred writers, to symbolize the awful disease of sin, its insidious, spreading, and deeply seated nature, and the impossibility of its cure except by the sovereign grace of God; and this may in part have been the reason why Moses made the laws above referred to, in order to show the contaminating influence of sin, of which leprosy was a

3 And Jesus put forth *his* hand, and touched him, saying, I will;

standing emblem. *And worshipped him.* Divine homage is not here intended, but reverence to a superior personage, from whom a great favor was about to be asked. See N. on 2:2. In Mark 1:40, he is said to have knelt to Jesus; in Luke 5:12, to have fallen on his face. There is no essential disagreement in the two accounts. In his distress, he may have preferred his request, at first, with a simple inclination of reverence, and at last, with entire prostration upon the ground. *Lord.* An honorary title, as *Master, teacher*, Heb. *Rabbi*. After our Savior's ascension, it was applied to him in its higher signification, of Supreme Lord and Head of all things, to whom all power was given in heaven and on earth (28:18). Alford after Stier, makes this an expression of faith, on the part of the leper, in Jesus as the Messiah. This may be true, and yet have been attended with a very imperfect knowledge of our Lord's true nature. It was a long time before the apostles even fully understood this. The faith of this leper and others in a similar condition, was rather a susceptibility of the heart to put itself under the guiding, controlling, renovating influence of Jesus as the Messiah, than any well defined belief in the nature of his kingdom, or the spirituality of his mission. *If thou wilt.* If such be thy pleasure. *Thou canst.* Thou hast the ability. When the incurable nature of this disease is taken into consideration, it was no small exhibition of faith in the leper, to avow this belief in Christ's power to heal him. *Make me clean.* So loathsome and filthy a disease was the leprosy, that persons afflicted with it were regarded as unclean, and its cure was denominated a *cleansing*.

3. *Put forth*, i. e. extended. Our Lord generally accompanied his miraculous cures with some external act, in order that there might be a visible connection, between the exertion of his healing power and the effect which followed. It was not necessary to the performance of this, or any other of his

be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

4 And Jesus saith unto him,  
<sup>b</sup> See thou tell no man; but go

<sup>b</sup> Ch. 9 : 30; Ma. 5 : 43.

miracles, that he should be brought in physical contact with the diseased person. It is therefore a wretched and baseless resort of scepticism, to attribute his cures to the manipulations of mesmerism or animal magnetism. In the case of the centurion's servant (vs. 5-13), the miracle of healing was wrought upon him, while lying at home upon his bed, and not having seen our Savior. In touching the leper, he showed his power to suspend the ceremonial law, which forbade the touching of such a person (Levit. 5 : 3); as he afterwards healed on the Sabbath, the Lord of which he claimed to be (12 : 8), when reproved as a sabbath-breaker by the cavilling and hypocritical Pharisees. *I will.* How promptly did he respond to the words of faith uttered by the leper. It is well remarked by Alford, that he nobly illustrated his own precept so lately delivered (6 : 42), "give to him that asketh thee." *Immediately.* The cure was instantaneous, and therefore miraculous. There could be no doubt of this. The most malignant form of leprosy (see N. on v. 2), yielded to no skill of the physician. The milder forms, unless taken at their commencement, admitted seldom of any remedy. An instantaneous cure of so dreadful and deep-seated a disease, could be attributed to no human agency. The fact that Jesus, at a single word, could expel from the system so inveterate a malady, and render a man, from being a most disgusting and hideous object, perfectly fair and healthy, was one of the strongest proofs of his power, which could be brought before a Jewish mind.

4. *See thou tell no man.* This miracle was wrought in comparative private. The design of the secrecy here enjoined, was to obtain from the priest a testimony to the validity of the cure, before he or the other enemies of Christ,

VOL. I.—4\*

thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that <sup>c</sup> Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

<sup>c</sup> Le. 14 : 3, 4; 10 Lu. 5 : 14.

knew how it was effected. A knowledge of this would have so prejudiced the priest, that he probably would have withheld the testimonial of the man's cleanness. The injunction of secrecy was only binding, until after this testimonial had been obtained. It is to be remembered, in this and other instances, where secrecy was enjoined upon the persons cured, that Jesus always wished to avoid all publicity and display for the reasons given in 12 : 15-21, that, as Alford remarks, "he might be known as the Messiah, not by wonder-working power, but by the grand result of his work upon earth." Olshausen refers it, from Mark's account, to the desire to prevent popular tumults; but from Matthew, he finds a reason for the prohibition in the person cured, there being seen in him something which required that his attention should be directed within, instead of to his outward cure. *Go thy way,* "he forthwith sent him away" (literally, *put him forth*). Mark. Prompt and speedy action is here represented. The miracle would soon be noised abroad, and coming to the priest's ears, the object which Jesus had in view would be defeated. *To the priest* at Jerusalem. The priest's duty, in such a case, was to carefully examine the man, and if there was evidence of a cure, to superintend the rites pertaining to his cleansing (Levit. 14 : 1-32). *For a testimony unto them,* i. e. for a proof to the people of the miraculous cure of the leper. This confirms the view given of the reason why our Lord enjoined secrecy. It was that the man might obtain the highest legal proof of his cure, by which to convince the people of its reality. *Unto them* does not refer to the priests (as Olshausen affirms, taking the word *priest* collectively), but to the people, whom Christ wished to convince of the miraculous cure, and upon whom this law of purification was yet binding.



5 ¶ <sup>d</sup> And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

6 And saying, Lord, my servant  
*d* Lu. 7 : 1, &c.

Alford translates, *against them*, and refers to Mark 6 : 11 ; Luke 9 : 5, but the context is there different.

5-13. THE HEALING OF THE CENTURION'S SERVANT. *Capernaum*. Luke 7 : 1-10.

5. *And when Jesus was entered*, Olshausen, *was entering*, but against the tense of the Greek participle. This was soon after the delivery of the Sermon on the Mount. *There came unto him a centurion*. In Luke 7 : 3, it is said that the centurion sent unto Jesus the elders of the Jews, beseeching him to come and heal his servant. The same diversity of statement is found in John 4 : 1, where Jesus is said to baptize, when he did it by his disciples. It is said (John 19 : 1) that Pilate scourged Jesus, yet he did it not with his own hands. So James and John (Mark 10 : 35) made a request of Jesus, while in Matt. 20 : 20, it was their mother who did it for them. In these instances, there is no discrepancy between the Evangelists, since nothing is more common, than to attribute to a man himself what is done through his agency. In respect to the healing of the centurion's servant, Luke (7 : 1-10) narrates the circumstances more fully than Matthew. A centurion, as the name imports, was the captain of a hundred men in the Roman army. That this centurion was a worshipper of the true God, is evident from the narration of both Matthew and Luke. Perhaps he was a *proselyte of the gate*, i. e. one who had forsaken Paganism, but remained uncircumcised, and in this and other respects, was distinguished from one who was called a *proselyte of righteousness*, and took upon himself the observance of the whole Mosaic ritual, and was received into the privileges of Jewish citizenship. Such proselytes, however, were usually characterized as *devout, fearing God*, &c. See Acts 2 : 5 ; 10 : 2.

lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

8 The centurion answered and

6. *My servant* ; literally, *my boy*, a common and familiar term, as at the present time, for a favorite servant or slave. This slave, as Calvin remarks, on the parallel passage in Luke, was probably one of rare fidelity and endowments, to thus render his master so extremely solicitous respecting his life. That he was a slave is evident from Luke 7 : 2, where he is thus expressly called. The great faith which our Lord found in this centurion (Luke 7 : 9), as well as the kind terms in which he addressed him, are worthy of the profoundest reflection, in discussing the subject which is now agitating this country. *At home*, i. e. in the centurion's house. *Sick of the palsy*. See N. on 4 : 24. *Grievously tormented*, i. e. in great agony of pain. Luke says that he was on the point of death. Trench thinks, that his disease was paralysis, with the contraction of the joints, which is accompanied with strong pain, and when thus united, causes extreme suffering, and rapidly brings on dissolution. It was evidently an extreme case of suffering and danger.

7. How promptly does our Lord accede to this request of the centurion, and how gracious are his words. *I will come and heal him*. The confidence with which he spoke of healing one so near his end, shows that his power to work miracles was not a derived one, but inherent in himself. In an official sense, as Messiah, God-man, his power is represented as a delegated one, but this does not infringe upon the attributes of divinity which are his, and upon which, as an everlasting and immutable foundation, repose the power and glory, which he receives in his mediatorial office from his Father who sent him.

8. *The centurion answered and said*. It appears from Luke's account (7 : 6) that our Lord accompanied the messengers, and that when he was near the

said, Lord, ' I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but <sup>f</sup> speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this *man*, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*.

10 When Jesus heard *it*, he

*e* Lu. 15: 19, 21. *f* Ps. 107: 20.

house, he was met by other messengers, conveying to him the humble message of the centurion, as here given. *I am not worthy*. It would be difficult to find elsewhere such a beautiful instance of humility and strong faith in the power of Christ. This Roman centurion, rich, influential, powerful, was so struck with the dignity and moral excellence of our Savior, that regardless of his lowly condition in life, he openly professed his own unworthiness to receive from him even a personal visit. Such also was his confidence in Christ's power to heal whomsoever he would, that he deemed it only necessary for him to speak the word, and it would be done. It is hardly to be wondered, that our Lord marvelled at such humility and faith.

9. *Under authority*, i. e. subject to the authority of others. The sentiment is: I who am but a subordinate officer, issue my orders to those who are under me, and they are promptly obeyed. Much more then may Christ, the sovereign Lord of all, issue his commands, and cause sickness, disease, and every form of suffering to disappear. It was this belief in our Lord's true character, wrought in his mind by the Spirit of God, which constituted the centurion's faith. *To my servant*. It is strange that Alford should draw from this the inference, that the centurion had but *one* slave. The singular is used generically for the whole class, as in James 5: 6; 2: 6; 1 Pet. 4: 18, etc.

10. *Heard it*, i. e. the words of the centurion. *He marvelled*; literally, was

marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

11 And I say unto you, That <sup>g</sup> many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven:

12 But <sup>h</sup> the children of the

*g* Ge. 12: 3; Is. 2: 2, 3, & 11: 10; Mal. 1: 11; Lu. 13: 29; Ac. 10: 45, & 11: 18, & 14: 27; Ro. 15: 9, &c.; Ep. 3: 6. *h* Ch. 21: 43.

*amazed* at the correct views of the centurion in regard to his mission and character. Not one of the apostles even had yet made such a profession of faith in the Messiah. *Them that followed*, i. e. his disciples. *Not in Israel*. Among the chosen people of God, with whom were the prophetic writings, which pointed so clearly to the character and office-work of the Messiah.

11. As the centurion was a Roman, whom the Jews regarded as having no part in the Messianic blessings, Jesus took occasion for the first time, so far as we know, to teach that those blessings were to be enjoyed by the remotest nations, and that from all quarters of the habitable world, there would come those, who with the holy patriarchs, would enjoy the blissful entertainment of this divinely constituted kingdom. *Many* refers to the Gentiles, who, as Bloomfield remarks, were such compared with *the children of the kingdom*, i. e. the Jews, the natural descendants of these holy Patriarchs, whose were the promises, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came. See Rom. 9: 4, 5. *From the east and west* (Luke 13: 29 adds *north and south*), i. e. from every quarter, all parts. *Shall sit down*; literally, *shall recline*, as at a banquet, the blessings of the Messianic reign being represented by a magnificent feast, at which these converts from heathenism are to recline with the patriarchs and founders of the Jewish nation.

kingdom 'shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done

i Ch. 13: 42, 50, & 22: 13, & 24: 51, & 25: 30; Lu. 13: 28; 2 Pe. 2: 17; Jude 13.

12. *Shall be cast out*, i. e. disinherited of the rich blessings, which had been theirs by natural descent. *Into outer darkness*. The imagery, as in the preceding verse, is founded upon a banquet-chamber, illuminated and filled with joyous guests, but outside of which and far off, are the regions of darkness, to which these rejected children of the kingdom, for whom the feast was originally spread, are to be for ever banished. *Outer* signifies the most extreme distance from the feast, where the darkness is thickest. *There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*; literally, *the weeping*, &c. See N. on the power of the article, 7: 25. The emphasis thus given by the article, may be rendered in an idiom familiar to us: *weeping that is weeping; such weeping as was never known elsewhere*. What a dreadful expression! How unavailing will be their tears of anguish, and how impotent the gnashing or grating of teeth, when the persons here spoken of become outcasts of God's kingdom. What a lesson is here taught to those who trust in natural descent or privileges, as a title to the inheritance of Christ's kingdom. Some critics give this power to the article, *the weeping and gnashing of teeth*, which are well-known as belonging to that place. This explanation is good, but less natural and forcible, and in sense repeats the adverb of place, with which the clause commences. I cannot agree with Olshausen, that these two contrasted states do not directly refer to the final happiness and misery of mankind, only as symbolical of them. No just meaning can be given the passage, which does not directly enter upon the future in all its eternal relations.

unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour.

14 ¶ <sup>k</sup> And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw <sup>l</sup> his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.

15 And he touched her hand, <sup>k</sup> Ma. 1: 29, 30, 31; Lu. 4: 38, 39. <sup>l</sup> 1 Co. 9: 5.

13. *Go thy way*. These words were addressed to the persons, who brought the centurion's message, and who thus were his representatives. He does not himself appear, at this time at least, to have seen Jesus at all. *As thou hast believed*, &c. His faith was great, and so also was the corresponding blessing. His servant was healed, and his own soul, doubtless, refreshed with peace and joy. *The self-same hour*. Luke (7: 10) says that the servant was found well, when they who had been sent to Jesus returned to the house.

14-17. THE HEALING OF PETER'S WIFE'S MOTHER, &c. Capernaum. Mark 1: 29-34; Luke 4: 38-41.

14. The healing of Peter's wife's mother is to be placed in the order of events, close upon the call of Peter, James, and John, narrated in 4: 18-22. They went from the lake-shore into Capernaum, and on the next sabbath, Jesus taught in the synagogue, and healed the man with the unclean spirit (Mark 1: 21-28). From the synagogue, it appears, that he went into Peter's house, and performed the miracle here spoken of. See Mark 1: 29, 31; Luke 4: 31-39. *Laid*, i. e. confined to her bed. The words, *and sick of a fever*, are added, to show what was her disease. This fulness of expression is quite common in the Bible, and other ancient writings.

15. *Touched her hand* (i. e. took her by the hand). See N. on v. 3. *The fever left her*. The cure was instantaneous, and therefore miraculous. *Arose and ministered unto* (i. e. waited upon) *them*. This shows the completeness of the cure, as a fever always leaves one weak and helpless. It also indicates that she belonged to those pious women

and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

16 ¶ " When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with *his* word, and healed all that were sick:

*m* Ma. 1: 32, &c.; Lu. 4: 40, 41.

in Galilee, who were always ready to minister to Jesus, both personally and of their substance (Luke 8: 3).

16. *When the even was come.* The later evening (see N. on 14: 15) is here referred to. The Jewish sabbath ended at sunset, and they were then at liberty to do any secular work. So strict was their external observance of the sabbath, that they would not bring their afflicted friends to be healed of the Lord Jesus until evening. Compare John 5: 10-16, where the Jews charged our Lord with a breach of the sabbath, in healing the impotent man, and sought to slay him on that account. *They brought unto him on beds and couches.* This shows that they were greatly diseased, and enhances the power of our Savior in their miraculous cure. *Many that were possessed with devils.* See N. on 4: 24. *The spirits.* The epithet, *unclean*, is generally added. *With his word* (literally, *by a word*), i. e. at a single authoritative command. There were no incantations, nostrums, or charms made use of, as was done by the Jewish exorcists; no senseless forms of exorcisms, and sprinklings, and mumbling of litanies, psalms, and prayers, as have been practised since by the Romish priesthood. A single word was all which accompanied this mighty power to expel malignant spirits. Luke (4: 41) says that the demons cried out and said, "Thou art Christ, the Son of God;" and both Mark and Luke say, that he suffered them not to speak, "because they knew him." If nothing but diseases are here referred to, as some persons claim, the personified sicknesses must have been endowed with more than human intelligence, and the command, that

17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sicknesses.

18 ¶ Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he

*n* Is. 53: 4; 1 Pe. 2: 24.

they (the diseases) should not speak, one of the most singular ones that ever was given. See N. on 4: 24. *And healed all that were sick.* The fact that sick persons are here spoken of in connection with demoniacs, has been seized upon as an argument, that the latter was only a separate class of sick persons, afflicted with hypochondria, insanity, epilepsy, madness, and other incurable diseases. But the connection is natural. They were different forms of affliction. To the one form, however, were attributed personal attributes, intelligence, malignity, fear (v. 29), while the other is a mere class of diseases.

17. *That it might be fulfilled, &c.* See N. on 1: 22. This prophecy is in Isa. 53: 4, being quoted in sense, but not in the exact words. The original seems to refer clearly to the sins of man, which our Lord bore in his own body upon the tree (1 Pet. 2: 24), but as all physical suffering proceeds from sin, it may well be accommodated to the healing and removing of diseases, such as are here enumerated. To this view the words in the original prophecy have a fulfilment, if it be borne in mind, as Olshausen well remarks, that "his whole soul entered with heartfelt sympathy into the necessities of the sufferers, that he really suffered with them."

18-27. JESUS GIVES DIRECTIONS TO CROSS THE LAKE. INCIDENTS BEFORE EMBARKING. STILLS THE TEMPEST. *Lake of Galilee.* Mark 4: 35-41; Luke 8: 22-25; 9: 57-62.

18. The occurrences here narrated took place some time after those referred to in the preceding verses.



gave commandment to depart unto the other side.

19 <sup>a</sup> And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

20 And Jesus saith unto him,

*o* Lu. 9 : 57, 58.

Matthew, in this chapter, seems to have grouped together incidents, without much regard to the order of time in which they occurred. It was after Jesus had made his second circuit in Galilee (Luke 8 : 1-3), and had pronounced the parables of the sower, the tares, the grain of mustard seed, &c. by the lake of Galilee, that he gave commandment to depart unto the other side of the lake, in order to avoid, for a little season, the great multitudes which were thronging to hear him. Mark (4 : 35) says that this took place on the evening of the same day, in which he pronounced the parables above referred to. So particular a statement shows that his chronological order is to be taken, as a guide in fixing the time of the occurrence here mentioned. Alford maintains that each Evangelist followed the order, as it lay in his own mind, and that the apparent discrepancies in the order of arrangement, show how entirely independent were they of one another. This may be true, and yet by comparison we may judge pretty accurately, which of the writers adheres the more closely to the real order of events.

19. *A certain scribe came.* This took place as they were going down to the shore, where lay the ship in which they were about to cross the lake. See Mark 4 : 57. The scribe professed his readiness to follow him to the other side, or whithersoever he might choose to go. His views of Christ's mission, and what was required of his followers, were very erroneous, as is evident from our Lord's reply, which was intended to undeceive him. He was ardent and impulsive, charmed no doubt by our Savior's discourse, and hoping from some of the

The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

21 <sup>p</sup> And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, <sup>q</sup> suffer me first to go and bury my father.

*p* Lu. 9 : 59, 60. *q* See 1 Ki. 19, 20.

parables just spoken, that the kingdom, which Jesus was about to establish, would be conducive to the temporal greatness of those who enrolled themselves as his followers. But how were such hopes, if he entertained them, dissipated by our Lord's reply. The most inferior animals have their places of rest, but the Son of man is a wanderer, having no place of his own, where he can lay his head to rest. He has no earthly possessions with which to reward his followers, but those who come after him, must look only for their reward in the higher spiritual good which is his to bestow.

20. *Foxes*; literally, *the foxes*, referring generically to this class of animals. See 24 : 28. *Holes.* Burrowing places of rest and safety. *Son of man.* This phrase appears to have been taken from Dan. 7 : 13, which the Jews understood as referring to the Messiah. See John 12 : 34 ; Luke 22 : 69, 70. Christ uses it to designate his humble, lowly condition, the depths of humiliation, into which he descended to redeem our race. Sometimes, when he would contrast his future exaltation, glory, and power, with his present state of suffering and shame, he also applies to himself this appellation. See 24 : 30 ; 26 : 24 ; Mark 13 : 26 ; 14 : 62 ; Luke 21 : 27 ; 22 : 69. In this reply to the selfish scribe, its use is remarkably apposite and affecting. *Hath not where to lay* (literally, *where he may or can lay*) *his head.* He has no dwelling-place which he can call his own. The expression is representative of the most abject poverty.

21, 22. *And another of his disciples.* This seems to imply that the scribe had been numbered as a disciple. But it was not so. The ambiguity of our English version may be shunned by

22 But Jesus said unto him, Follow me ; and let the dead bury their dead.

23 ¶ And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

24 And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves : but he was asleep.

25 And his disciples came to

r Ma. 4 : 37, &c. ; Lu. 8 : 23, &c.

translating, *another, who was one of his disciples, said.* In Luke (9 : 59) we find that our Lord first directed this person to follow him. He was a disciple (tradition says Philip), who, for the reason given in the sequel, or some other cause, was manifesting some backwardness in following Christ to the other side of the lake, where he would enjoy further instruction. But he was peremptorily commanded to follow his master ; and his reply to this direction is all that is related by Matthew. The Evangelists are frequently found to vary in fullness of detail, and should be compared with one another, in order to obtain a clear view of the subject in hand. In the account given by Matthew, we could have anticipated such a previous command, by the ellipsis implied in the reply, and therefore nothing essential is by him omitted. *Lord, suffer me first to go, &c.* This seemed a reasonable request. The great command, the first with promise, to honor one's parents, would seem to require the presence of a son, in performing the last rites to a deceased father. But our Savior, who knew the hearts of all men, and had power over every law relating to social duties, saw that the leaven of worldliness, or the endearments of home, was drawing away the mind of that disciple from attention and devotedness to concerns, of infinitely higher importance than any earthly relations, and therefore he replied in calm but decided terms: *Follow me ; and let the dead bury their dead,* i. e. let those who are spiritually dead (Rev. 3 : 1) attend to the burial of those literally dead. Luke adds, "but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." This command was not to be immediately put into execution, but by following Christ, and attending upon

his teachings and instructions, he was, with his fellow disciples, to be fitted for the great work, after the ascension of his Master.

23. *A ship.* A small fishing vessel suited to the lake of Galilee. *His disciples followed him,* i. e. embarked also in the vessel. According to Mark (4 : 36), several small boats or vessels accompanied the one which he was in.

24. *There arose a great tempest.* Matthew uses a word here, literally signifying a *shaking, violent agitation, or an earthquake,* to represent the commotion of the elements. Luke (8 : 23) says, "there came down a storm of wind upon the lake." The position of this lake with its high hills on either side, exposed it to sudden and violent windstorms. *Was covered* (literally, *was becoming covered*), i. e. almost submerged. The waves were beginning to break over the ship, and it was in an almost sinking condition. *But he was asleep.* He was greatly fatigued with the labors of the day. It was probably to obtain a little rest for his exhausted mental and physical powers, that he had dismissed the multitude which thronged about him (Mark 4 : 36), and had taken ship to cross the lake. As soon as he went on board, he seems to have sunk into so deep a sleep, that the roar of the tempest, and the cries of those on board the ship, did not awaken him. This shows how great were his weariness and physical exhaustion.

25. *Lord, save us, we perish,* i. e. we are on the point of going down before this dreadful tempest. In Mark (4 : 38), "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" This was said in reference to his being asleep in such a gale. They doubtless hoped that one who had performed such wondrous cures, could in some way assist them, but were not pre-

him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us : we perish.

26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea;

8 Ps. 65 : 7, & 89 : 9, & 107 : 29.

pared for so mighty and sublime a manifestation of his power over the elements, as that which followed.

26. *Why are ye so fearful, &c.* Had their faith been like that of the centurion, they would never have yielded to fear, with such a person on board, as their divine Lord and Savior. Jesus therefore gently rebuked their want of faith, before he calmed the tempest. It is of more importance that the heart be right, and errors within be corrected, than to be preserved from the most imminent external peril. Bloomfield makes their littleness of faith to consist in not confiding in his power to save, as well asleep as awake. They had some faith, or they would not have had recourse to him in their extremity. But our Lord would have his people trust in him, however insensible he may be apparently to their danger. Mark and Luke speak of this reproof, as administered after the hushing of the tempest, but the order of Matthew is to be followed, as more definite in the particles of time which connect the clauses. *Then he arose.* He could have wrought this great miracle in a recumbent position, but it was more suitable to his dignity as Lord of nature, that he should rise and assume an attitude of command. *And there was a great calm.* The passage quoted by Longinus, "let there be light, and there was light," as a remarkable instance of the sublime, is not more entitled to this distinction than these words before us. At his simple command, "Peace, be still," (Mark 4 : 39, on which see N.) suddenly, as if all nature was hushed to repose, "the wind ceased and there was a great calm."

27. *But the men marvelled.* These are supposed by some to be the men who

and there was a great calm.

27 But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!

28 ¶ And when he was come

† Ma. 5 : 1, &c. ; Lu. 8 : 26, &c.

worked the ship, but it is better to refer it to all who were in the vessel besides our Lord. Both Mark and Luke speak of their being greatly terrified at this manifestation of a power, altogether beyond what was possessed by a created being. *Saying* ("one to another," Luke), in the low tones of amazement. Such was their awe, that they do not appear to have addressed him. *What manner of man is this?* This question implies that they regarded him, for the moment at least, as a superhuman being. *That even the winds, &c.* They had witnessed his power over demons and sicknesses; they had seen the widow's son at Nain restored to life, but this wondrous control over the elements, so mightily exerted, and with such complete and immediate effect, seemed to far transcend any previous manifestation of his miraculous power.

28-34 ; 9 : 1. THE HEALING OF THE TWO DEMONIACS OF GADARA. *S. E. coast of the Lake of Galilee.* Mark 5 : 1-21 ; Luke 8 : 26-40.

28. *To the other side of the lake. Country of the Gergesenes.* Mark and Luke call it the country of the Gadarenes. It is the opinion of judicious critics, that the reading of Matthew should be *Gerasenes*, which, according to Origen, was the ancient reading. Dr. Robinson remarks, that if this reading be correct, Gerasa lay so far from the lake, that the miracle could not have been wrought in its vicinity. Its being a provincial capital, however, caused its name to be given to a large extent of country, including Gadara. Matthew employs the name in this broad appellation, while Mark and Luke are more specific, in naming the very place where the miracle was performed. Gadara, the name of this place, belonged

to the other side, into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

to the district called Decapolis (Matt. 4: 25), and was situated near the summit of the mountains lying east of the valley of the Jordan, a few miles S. E. of the southern extremity of the lake. On the east of the ruins identified as those of Gadara, are found many sepulchres hewn in the limestone rocks. Some of these tombs are large and are still inhabited, much as they were by these demoniacs. *There met him.* Some think that their design at first was to offer violence to Jesus and his company, but from Mark's account, it would seem more probable that they drew near to Jesus, through some secret influence wrought in them at sight of Him who was to be their Deliverer. At any rate they attempted no violence, but prostrated themselves as suppliants for his favor. See N. on Mark 5: 7. *Two possessed of devils.* Mark and Luke speak of only one demoniac. But there is no essential variance between Matthew's statement and theirs. His object seems to have been, to narrate simply their cure by Christ; while the attention of the two other Evangelists was directed mainly to the wondrous conversion of one of these demoniacs, who, from a state of savage fierceness, was brought to sit at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and afterwards to become a preacher to the people of his own city. They speak, therefore, of him only, and omit to mention the other demoniac, whose cure was not followed by so remarkable a result. The idea of some, that Matthew made a mistake, through a misunderstanding of the reply of the demon, "for we are many" (Mark 5: 9), is preposterous. *Coming out of the tombs.* The sepulchres of the Jews were either artificial excavations of the earth, or places cut out from rocks. As Gadara was situated near the crest of a mountain, the

29 And behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

30 And there was a good way

tombs here spoken of were doubtless natural or artificial excavations in the rocky sides of the mountain. These sepulchres were commonly situated without the limits of cities or villages. They furnished convenient lodging places for madmen and other outcasts from society. *Exceeding fierce.* They were raving maniacs, and so fiercely disposed to deeds of violence, as to render it unsafe for persons to pass along the way near them. See Mark 5: 2-5; Luke 8: 29.

29. *Cried out*, i. e. exclaimed in loud tones. *What have we to do with thee*; literally, *what is there to us and you?* What common interests have we, or why is it necessary that we should come together, since there is no bond of intercourse between us? These words are those of the demons, speaking through the vocal organs of the man possessed. On the order of this transaction, see Mark 5: 7, with Note. *Thou Son of God.* It is an unanswerable argument against the theory of those, who deny the reality of demoniacal possession, that these madmen, as they consider them only to be, had such knowledge of the true character of Christ. It were strange indeed, that raving insanity could make persons afflicted therewith, so superior to all others in spiritual discernment, that they could determine at first sight, that Jesus was the Son of God, the long expected King of the Jewish nation. *Art thou come*, &c. The time of torment here referred to, is the judgment of the great day, to which, Jude says (v. 6), "the angels that kept not their first estate, are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness." At the approach of the Son of God, whom these demons well knew, but the purpose of whose advent in the form of humanity, they probably did not fully



off from them an herd of many swine feeding.

31 So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer

understand, they were seized with fear, lest their time of comparative freedom to go to and fro throughout the earth (Job 1 : 7 ; 2 : 2), and of exemption from their full measure of suffering, was to be cut short. *To torment*, to torture with pain. *The time*. The appointed time of their full punishment. The full import of this was doubtless understood only by our Lord and the demons.

30. *A good way off*, i. e. at a considerable distance on the hills (Luke, "on the mountain"), which skirted the plain where our Savior had landed. These swine were in sight, as they are referred especially to, in the next verse, as *the herd*, and not *a herd*. *Many swine*. Mark (5 : 13) says that there were about 2000. As Gadara was one of the remotest towns of the country, and annexed to Syria by the Romans, except in the reign of Herod the Great, to whom it had been given by Augustus, the inhabitants, contrary to the laws of the Jews, seem to have been engaged quite extensively in raising swine for the Gentile market. They were then rightly punished at this time, in the loss of so large a herd of swine. Another reason why the swine were permitted to be possessed, may be found in the palpable evidence thereby furnished, of the power and hellish cruelty of these demons, who had so long possessed the men. No objection can be advanced against this on the score of humanity, for had a thousand times this number of swine perished, it would have been nothing, if thereby the Savior's power in destroying the works of the devil, was made the more manifest.

31. *The devils besought him*, &c. This is to be referred to their desire to thwart the benevolent mission of Jesus to these parts. Such was the result. The alarmed and selfish Gadarenes urgently prayed Jesus to depart from their coasts, fearing perhaps the loss of

us to go away into the herd of swine.

32 And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out,

other unlawful possessions, in case he should enter and remain any length of time in their city. *Into the herd* which were in sight, although at some distance from the scene of the miracle, and near the foot of the mountain. See N. on Mark 5 : 11.

32. *Ran violently down*, &c. The swine were feeding upon the hills at the foot of the mountain (see Mark 5 : 11, compared with Luke 8 : 32), down the precipitous sides of which bordering on the sea, they rushed under the influence of the demons. Those acquainted with the habits of this animal well know, that no driving or coaxing would have sufficed to impel them down such a cliff or steep declivity into the waters below. The demoniacal agency in this transaction is referred by those who deny its real existence, to the demoniacs themselves, who impetuously attacked the herd, and drove them down the steep. But not to speak of the impossibility above referred to, of driving swine down such a precipice—a feat, which, if undertaken, would have resulted in the dispersion of so large a herd in every direction, except the one whither the madmen were attempting to drive them—with what show of reason or stretch of rhetoric could it be said, that the men themselves did this, when it is expressly said by Luke (8 : 33), that the devils went out of the men, and entering into the swine, caused them to run down the steep place; a statement in which the other evangelists also concur. It requires a far greater stretch of credulity to believe the absurdities, with which those who deny the reality of demoniacal possessions, endeavor to explain away such passages, as the one before us, than to take the plain, naked statements of the sacred writers, in their obvious and legitimate meaning. *Perished in the waters*; Mark, "were choked (i. e. strangled) in the sea." So Luke. Their

they went into the herd of swine : and behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

33 And they that kept them, fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing ; and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.

34 And, behold, the whole city

*u* See De. 5 : 25 ; 1 Ki. 17 : 18 ; Lu. 5 : 8 ; Ac. 16 : 39.

destruction was complete ; all the efforts of the animals to save themselves by swimming or otherwise, being paralyzed by the demons who possessed them. Had the madmen driven them down the steep place, it would have been strange if some had not escaped destruction.

33. *Went their ways.* An old form of expression for *went away*. *Into the city*, i. e. Gadara. *What was befallen*, &c. The word *befallen* in common usage, now denotes the happening to one of something adverse. This is not its meaning here. *The things respecting the demoniacs*, is the more literal translation of the passage.

34. *The whole city.* The stupendous miracle, attended with such a destruction of property, so aroused the city, that its inhabitants poured forth to meet Jesus, and united in beseeching him to depart out of their coasts. A most remarkable indifference to their highest interests, to urge the departure of one whom they must have known, by what they had heard of his doctrines, instructions, and miracles, as well as by this cure of the wretched demoniacs, to have both the will and power to do them good. Their infatuation is but the type, however, of thousands, who in every age, have virtually prayed the Savior to depart from them, even when by the subduing influences of his Spirit, he was ready to make their hearts the seat of his abode.

#### CHAPTER IX.

1. *A ship* ; literally, *the ship*, i. e. the

came out to meet Jesus : and when they saw him, "they besought *him* that he would depart out of their coasts.

#### CHAPTER IX.

AND he entered into a ship, and passed over, "and came into his own city."

2 <sup>b</sup> And behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy,

*a* Ch. 4 : 13. *b* Ma. 2 : 3 ; Lu. 5 : 18.

one in which he had previously crossed the lake, or the one which plied between these extremities of the lake. *His own city*, i. e. Capernaum. This verse properly closes the preceding chapter.

2-8. THE HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC. *Capernaum.* Mark 2 : 1-12 ; Luke 5 : 17-26. This miracle was wrought not many days after the cure of the leper (8 : 2-4). The narration is much fuller in Mark and Luke, than in Matthew.

2. *They brought to him.* This refers to the friends or relatives of the paralytic. *Sick of the palsy.* See N. on 4 : 24. *Lying on a bed.* He was so helpless, that he was borne into the presence of Jesus, by four men (Mark), on a quilt or mattress, or perhaps some light and cushioned frame suitable for carrying a sick person. *And Jesus seeing their faith.* It appears from both Mark and Luke, that when they could not pass in through the door of the house, in consequence of the crowd, they ascended the house-top, and let the sick man down through the roof, (the tiling of which they had broken up, Luke 5 : 19,) into the midst in the presence of Jesus. See N. on Mark 2 : 4. It was a remarkable instance of faith and perseverance both of the sick man and of those who brought him, and as such was commended by our Savior. *Son.* A term of endearment and encouragement, frequently used by one superior in age and dignity, in addressing an inferior. The Hebrews used it with great freedom and latitude. *Thy sins be for-*

lying on a bed : and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy ; Son, be of good cheer ; thy sins be forgiven thee.

3 And, behold, certain of the

c Ch. 8 : 10.

*given thee.* Such was his faith and love for him, into whose presence with such difficulty he had been brought, that our Lord, who knew well the state of his heart, pronounced his sins forgiven. This was done in part to show that diseases are the result of sin, which has disarranged and impaired not only the mental, but the physical nature of man. It was also a varied exhibition of the power of Jesus, in the presence of these wicked Scribes and Pharisees, who were watching all his words and actions. Some think that the man incurred his disease through vicious indulgence, and that being brought now to a sense of guilt and a determination to forsake sin, his Savior graciously pronounced his forgiveness. It was common with the Jews to regard diseases as the effect of sin.

3. *Certain of the scribes.* We are now for the first time in Matthew's gospel introduced to this class of men, who, in company with the Pharisees (Luke 5 : 21), followed our Savior from place to place, to find occasion of accusing him before the Jewish or Roman tribunal. The continued attendance of these subtle, bitter, unrelenting foes, until at last their malice was satisfied by his death, gave rise to some of the most remarkable incidents and sayings of our Savior's ministry. The rottenness of their moral character, but ill-covered with the flimsy veil of their pretended piety and purity of life, is often seen in contrast with the moral excellence of Christ, and thus are brought out in strong relief, the opposite effects of sin and holiness upon the life and character of men. *Said within themselves.* They reasoned in their hearts (Mark 2 : 6), and perhaps addressed one another in low tones, so as not to be heard

scribes said within themselves, *This man blasphemeth.*

4 And Jesus, <sup>d</sup> knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts ?

5 For whether is easier to say,

*d* Ps. 139 : 2 ; ch. 12 : 25 ; Ma. 12 : 15 ; Lu. 5 : 22, & 6 : 8, & 9 : 47, & 11 : 17.

by Jesus. See 21 : 38 ; Acts 28 : 29, where the latter sense must be given to this phrase. *This man.* The expression in the original implies contempt, *this fellow, this wretch.* See N. on Mark 2 : 7. *Blasphemeth.* This word literally signifies, *to speak evil of, to rail at,* and is used here of an assumption of power and language, which belongs only to God. The scribes properly judged, that no created being had a right on his own authority to forgive sin. Their theory was correct. But such was the blindness and hardness of their hearts, that they failed to discover the true character of Jesus, although clearly indicated by his wondrous deeds, and the heavenly nature of his doctrine.

4. *Knowing their thoughts.* This proof of his omniscience ought to have convinced them, that it was no ordinary man in whose presence they were. *Wherefore, to what end or purpose. Think ye evil in your hearts ?* Why do you indulge in such evil thoughts, respecting what I have just said ? This shows that the heart was the seat of their unbelief, whether their thoughts were confined to their own breasts, or communicated in low whispers to one another.

5. *For whether is easier, &c.* Our Lord here teaches that the miracles wrought by him, furnished abundant proof of his power to forgive sin. It was as easy to utter one of these forms of expression as the other, and by the immediate effect which should follow the words, *arise, take up thy bed,* which he was about to speak, he showed his power to pronounce with like effect the remission of the man's sins. No one, unless acting under divine influence and authority, could cause this man at a

*Thy sins be forgiven thee ; or to say, Arise, and walk ?*

6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.

single word to arise and walk ; and the ability to do this, was convincing proof of a like ability to do the other. Inasmuch as the remission of sin was not discernible by the physical senses, our Lord graciously proceeded to work an external miracle, thereby evincing power to remit the sins of whomsoever he would.

6. *Son of man.* See N. on 8 : 20. *On earth*, i. e. in his state of humiliation. The phrase implies a condition of heavenly glory, in which no one will call in question his right to remit sins. On earth also as Son of man, Messiah, God manifest in the flesh, he has also this power, the proof of which was the great miracle, which he was about to perform on this helpless paralytic. *Then saith he, &c.* This is not a parenthesis. The preceding clause may be regarded as elliptical : "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (I now say to the man,) Arise," &c. This omitted clause is thrown by the Evangelist into a narrative form, *then saith he, &c.* Alford finds a similar construction in Gen. 3 : 22, 23. *Take up thy bed.* This was added to show his perfect cure, from a state of absolute helplessness. *Go unto thy house.* Another confirmatory evidence of his complete cure.

7. *He arose a well man. And departed, &c.* The multitude, doubtless, gave way, and left him space to come forth from the house.

8. *The multitudes*, which were in the house and thronging around the doors. They saw the paralytic enter, lying helplessly on his couch. In a few moments, he comes forth in the full enjoyment of strength and activity of limb,

7 And he arose, and departed to his house.

8 But when the multitudes saw *it*, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

9 ¶ And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man named

*e* Ma. 2 : 14 ; Lu. 5 : 27.

bearing the bed on which he had lain, and uttering loud thanks to God for his wondrous goodness (Luke 5 : 25). They might well be astonished at the sight, and give glory to God for sending them such a teacher and helper. *They marvelled.* Mark expresses it more strongly : *they were all amazed*, and Luke still more strongly : *ecstasy seized upon all*, i. e. they were filled with transports at the cure which had been wrought. *Which had given such power* (i. e. the ability to work such miracles). These are not the words of the Evangelist, but a part of the ascription of praise. *Unto men ; literally, unto the men.* This is not to be regarded as the plural for the singular, *to the man* (i. e. Jesus), or *for the benefit of men*, as some erroneously interpret it, but *unto men* (generically considered), i. e. mankind. The possession of this power being granted to one, was regarded by the people as something given to mankind. So we pass, in common language, the invention or discovery of one person, to the credit of the human mind in its collective sense, as exemplifying its wonderful powers and capacities.

9. THE CALL OF MATTHEW. *Caper-naum.* Mark 2 : 13, 14 ; Luke 5 : 27, 28. *As Jesus passed from thence*, i. e. from the house in which the paralytic was cured. Mark (2 : 13) says that he went forth again by the sea-side, and there taught the multitude who resorted unto him. On his way to the borders of the lake, he passed by the place where the revenue or taxes were received, and seeing a publican or tax-gatherer sitting there, named Matthew (called in Mark and Luke, Levi), he bade him follow him as a disciple.



Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

10 ¶ And it came to pass, as

f Ma. 2: 15, &c.; Lu. 5: 29, &c.

This he immediately did, although we must suppose that he settled his accounts with his employers, before he connected himself permanently with the disciples of Christ. He would otherwise have been amenable to the civil tribunal. Doddridge, with his usual good judgment, remarks, that the feast, which was given some months after (see N. on v. 10), may have been on the occasion of his making up his accounts, and passing his business into other hands, which, from a principle of justice, as well as prudence, he would take care to do.

10-17. LEVI'S FEAST. *Capernaum.*  
Mark 2: 15-22; Luke 5: 29-39.

10. It appears from Luke 5: 29, that Levi (as Matthew is called by Luke) made the feast here spoken of. It would seem at first glance, to have immediately followed his call at the receipt of custom. But we find that while he was reclining at the feast, a scribe came and begged him to restore his daughter, lying at the point of death (see v. 18). But this incident, according to Mark (5: 22), and Luke (8: 41), did not take place until after his return from the country of the Gadarenes. The three Evangelists seem to have joined this feast to the call of Matthew, in order to relate in one connection all that is especially said about him. In Matthew, both the call and feast are placed after the passage across the lake, whereas the former was a number of months previous to the latter. On the other hand, Mark and Luke, while they assign to the call its proper place in the history, transfer the feast to the time of the call, although it took place some months after. In other words, Matthew places both the call and the feast after the visit to the Gadarenes, while Mark and Luke place them before that visit. The integrity of the narrative

Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples,

is not at all affected by this transposition. *Sat at meat*; literally, *was reclining at table*. In the time of Christ, the Jews had adopted the Persian custom of reclining upon the left side, with their faces towards the table. The couch, on which they reclined, was somewhat higher than the low table, on which the provisions were spread, and was called a *triclinium*, because it was usually made large enough to hold three persons. In reclining at the table, the head of the second guest approached the breast of the first, the head of the third, the breast of the second, and so on. This explains the expression, *leaning upon one's bosom*. The place coveted by the Pharisees, was the central position on one of these mats or couches. See Luke 14: 8, 10. *In the house of Matthew*. It is not declared in so many words that Matthew made this feast. But the use of the Greek article gives to *the house*, the sense of *his house*, which, as Matthew was himself the writer, was a modest way of intimating what Mark and Luke declare expressly to have been done by him. *Many publicans and sinners*. Under this expression were included all those who fell below the pharisaic observance of the law. The publicans and common people were regarded by them as great sinners, to eat with whom would be a moral contamination. See N. on 5: 46. As Matthew had been a publican, many of this class were doubtless present at the feast.

11. *The Pharisees of the place*. Luke says "their scribes and Pharisees," meaning those who resided in Capernaum, and assumed to themselves the oversight of religious affairs. *Saw it*; literally, *having noticed it*. We are not to suppose that they stood by, and looked on upon the festive entertain-

Why eateth your Master with  
<sup>g</sup> publicans and <sup>h</sup> sinners ?

12 But when Jesus heard *that*,  
 he said unto them, They that be

<sup>g</sup> Ch. 11: 19; Lu. 5: 30, & 15: 2. <sup>h</sup> Ga. 2: 15.

ment. The conversation recorded in vs. 11-17, took place *after*, and not at the feast, as there could have been no opportunity to thus address the disciples, while they were reclining at the meal, surrounded by the very persons against whom the Pharisees inveighed. They had been probably informed of the feast, and took occasion at its close to rebuke the disciples. *Master*. Teacher. According to the Talmudists, no professed teacher or Rabbi was to sit at table with the lower class of people.

12. *They that be whole*, &c. A proverbial expression, containing in its use and application by our Savior, a world of instruction. It expresses a principle of universal practice, that a physician's aid is sought for the sick, and not for those in good health. Its spiritual application is plain and pointed. In some respects, however, the resemblance, between those who are naturally, and those who are spiritually diseased, ceases. Those afflicted with bodily ills feel their need of a physician, and are not slow to apply for medical aid. But from the very nature of their disease, those who are spiritually sick have no conception of their true condition, and hence feel no need of any spiritual remedy. They make no application to the Physician of souls for relief. This was the case with the Pharisees. They rejected, as useless to persons as righteous as themselves, the warnings and instructions of Christ, and therefore he proffered the remedies of the gospel to those who were less righteous in their own estimation.

13. *Go ye and learn*, i. e. learn henceforth. Such forms are not so much pleonastic, as intended to give fullness and completeness to the idea. This fullness is often found in the conversational phrases of every people, ancient and modern. *Learn what that mean-*

whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

13 But go ye, and learn what *that* meaneth, <sup>i</sup> I will have mercy,

<sup>i</sup> Ho. 6: 6; Mi. 6: 6, 7, 8; ch. 12: 7.

*eth*, i. e. get at the true signification of the passage referred to. *I will have mercy*. The quotation is from Hos. 6: 6, and is the sense also of 1 Sam. 15: 22. The original Hebrew for *mercy*, more properly designates, *acts of piety and goodness*, and is opposed to *sacrifice* in the sense of *victims*, put for the observance of external forms and ceremonies. The Pharisees had reversed these duties, neglecting that for which God, in the passage quoted, declared his preference, and being scrupulously strict in outward forms, which were regarded by Him as of no intrinsic value. *I came not to call*, &c. The external invitation of the gospel is here referred to, and not what is denoted *effectual calling*. The sentiment of the proverb in v. 12, is here reduced to plain language. The word *righteous* (in the proverb, *the whole*) refers to those who are so in their own estimation, like the Pharisees. By *sinners* (in the proverb *the sick*) are meant those who feel their lost and ruined condition, and gladly avail themselves of any spiritual remedy which may be provided. Such persons Christ declares that he came to call to repentance. The gospel was provided for sinners. The strictly or legally righteous need no gospel. They are justified by their perfect obedience to God's law. The self-righteous Pharisees, claiming to be legally just, did not, on their own profession, need the gospel any more than the holy angels who never sinned. Such persons were passed by in our Lord's gracious visitation, not because they did not in reality stand in pressing need of the gospel, but because not feeling their want of it, they would have rejected it, had its calls been directly addressed to them. The moment any one of their number threw away his robe of self-righteousness, and admitted his lost condition

and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, <sup>k</sup> but sinners to repentance.

14 ¶ Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, 'Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?'

15 And Jesus said unto them,

<sup>k</sup> 1 Ti. 1: 15. <sup>l</sup> Ma. 2: 18, &c.; Lu. 5: 33, &c., & 18: 12. <sup>m</sup> Jn. 3: 29.

and helplessness, he came at once within the provisions of grace, and to him the gospel with its blessings and promises was freely proffered. It need hardly be said, that this passage does not in the least degree imply, that there ever was or will be a person on earth, so righteous as not to need the gospel.

14. John was at this time in prison, and his disciples were scattered in various parts of the land. Some of them may have been present at the great feast given by Levi, and struck with the air of cheerfulness which prevailed, so unlike the austerity practised by John, and inculcated without doubt upon his disciples, they came with the inquiry, why the habits of his disciples in respect to fastings and prayers (Luke), were so unlike those of John's disciples, or the disciples of the Pharisees, as Mark and Luke record the inquiry. There seems in this question to be a tinge of censure, or at least of a fault-finding spirit, which, through the infirmity of their nature, good men even are sometimes prone to indulge.

15. The reply of our Lord illustrates the great principle, that there is to be a congruity between our acts, and the circumstances with which we are surrounded. What is proper and suitable at one time or occasion, may be far otherwise in other circumstances. We are always to have regard to this principle of congruity, and not adopt any habit or practice, without carefully considering its fitness and propriety in view of existing circumstances. *Children of the bride-chamber*, i. e. the bridemen, or companions of the bridegroom, who attended him with songs

Can <sup>m</sup> the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and <sup>n</sup> then shall they fast.

16 No man putteth a piece of 'new cloth unto an old garment:

<sup>n</sup> Ac. 13: 2, 3, & 14: 23; 1 Co. 7: 5. <sup>!</sup> Or, raw, or, unwrought cloth.

and instrumental music, as he conducted the bride from her residence to his father's house, she being in like manner surrounded with virgins of her own age. On their arrival at the place where the nuptials were to be celebrated, the male attendants and other guests indulged in feasting and conviviality, while the females, in an apartment by themselves, partook also in the general gaiety and cheerfulness. See Dr. Jahn, Arch. § 154. On such a joyous occasion, it would be wholly unsuitable for these attendants of the bridegroom, to indulge in lamentations, and appear with sad and dejected countenance. *As long as the bridegroom is present with them*, i. e. during the wedding festivities, and while they are companions of the bridegroom. In respect to our Lord's use of this term, as applied to himself, see John 3: 29. *But the days will come*, &c. If by some sudden death or casualty, the bridegroom should be removed from the scene of festivity, then mourning would with propriety take the place of joy. Those who heard this beautiful illustration, could have no difficulty in referring it to the presence of Jesus with his disciples, which rendered it unsuitable for them to mourn, as did the disciples of John, who were deprived of the society of their teacher. Our Savior also intimates, and perhaps here for the first time, that he should be separated from his disciples, and then it would be for them to weep and fast. *Shall be taken*; more literally, *shall have been taken*. *Then shall they fast*. No obligation or command is expressed here, but simply that there

for that which is put in to fill it up, taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.

17 Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine run-

eth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

18 ¶ ° While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and wor-

o Ma. 5 : 22, &c. ; Lu. 8 : 41, &c.

will be occasion of fasting in those days of bereavement. Fastings under the Christian dispensation are not regulated and enforced by law, as in the Mosaic ritual, but are to be the spontaneous acts of a soul mourning the absence of Christ, and longing for his spiritual presence, which is the deeper meaning of the absence of the bridegroom here referred to.

16. A second illustration of the principle of conformity and fitness of things, is drawn from the unsuitableness of mending old garments with patches of new cloth. To us with our present style of fabrics, this is not at first clear. A housewife does not hesitate to mend articles of apparel with new cloth. But the whole matter becomes clear, when we refer to the ancient material and mode of dressing cloth. The word rendered *new*, literally signifies, *not carded or teased*, as was done in softer and finer cloth, with a comb or teasel. Cloth in this undressed state, was so harsh, rough, and unyielding, that when sewed to cloth, old and thin through use, it would wear or fret away the edge of the seam, or, in the language here used, *would take away from the garment, and cause a worse rent*; because in addition to the old rent, filled by the new cloth, another rent now takes place outside of it. Some think that this illustration refers to the incongruity of engrafting the doctrine of Christ, in respect to fasts and other religious observances, upon those of the Old Testament dispensation, or what is the same thing, confounding the Old and New dispensations. There can be no objection to thus considering its application in part at least. But in this connection, we must regard it as en-

forcing, like the preceding illustration, the general principle of fitness and congruity, and its application may be easily made to the various subjects which are referable to it. The same principle in a different form is taught in Eccles. 3 : 1-8.

17. The subject is still further and more forcibly illustrated, by a reference to the kind of bottles into which old and new wine was put. Bottles in those days were made of the skins of animals taken off whole, and were called *wine-skins, water-skins, &c.* These, when old and dried, became tender and were easily burst. New wine in a process of fermentation would almost certainly cause them to burst open. They were therefore only suitable for containing old wine, while new and unfermented juice of the grape, would be put into new and strong wine-skins. Luke (5 : 39) has an additional illustration, drawn from the inspidity of new wine to one, who has just been drinking that which is old, refined, and well flavored. Alford refers the parable of the new and old bottles, to the inner life and spirit of Christianity, symbolized by wine poured in; the former or second illustration of the new and old cloth, to the outward manifestation and freedom of the New Covenant. But it is better to regard the whole passage, as containing a three-fold illustration of the simple but fundamental principle of congruity and fitness, which should regulate our external deportment, and even our religious duties, and thus being a direct and satisfactory reply to the question proposed by John's disciples.

18-26. THE RAISING OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER. THE HEALING OF THE WOMAN WITH THE ISSUE OF BLOOD.



shipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

19 And Jesus arose, and fol-

*Capernaum.* Mark 5 : 22-43 ; Luke 8 : 41-56.

The account of Matthew is the most concise of the three, that of Mark being the most full and circumstantial. The time of the performance of these miracles is very definitely fixed in Matthew. The question proposed by John's disciples must have been at the close of the feast, and it was while our Lord was replying to it, that the ruler came to him in behalf of his dying child. According to Mark and Luke, this miracle took place, after he had recrossed the lake from the country of the Gadarenes, and while he was nigh to the sea (Mark 5 : 21). There is nothing to forbid our supposing that Jesus, after the feast made by Levi, walked forth to the shore of the lake, as a more convenient and retired place to impart instruction, and that there he held the conversation with John's disciples, and from that place he proceeded to restore the ruler's daughter.

18. *While he spake*; literally, *while he was speaking*. This connects the following transaction immediately with what precedes. As these things took place in Matthew's house, his chronology is to be followed rather than that of Mark or Luke. *Unto them*, i. e. John's disciples and the Pharisees. *A certain ruler* (literally, *a ruler*) of the synagogue (Mark and Luke). His name was Jairus (Luke 8 : 41). The *archon*, or ruler of the synagogue, presided over the synagogue worship, and invited readers and speakers to officiate (Acts 13 : 15), unless they voluntarily offered themselves (Luke 4 : 16). *My daughter*. "My little daughter" (Mark); "an only daughter about twelve years of age," (Luke). *Is even now dead*. The child lay at the point of death (see Luke and Mark), when the ruler went forth to Jesus, and while in company

lowed him, and *so did* his disciples.

20 ¶ *p* And behold, a woman which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came be-

*p* Ma. 5 : 25 ; Lu. 8 : 43.

with our Lord on his return, he was informed by a messenger, that she was actually dead. This last circumstance being designedly omitted by Matthew, he summarily expressed it by putting into the mouth of the ruler, at his first approach to Jesus, the declaration of her death, which thus makes him apparently, but not really, at variance with the other two Evangelists. This harmonizes the statements far more satisfactorily, than to paraphrase, as some expositors do, the ruler's words thus: "My daughter is by this time, I fear, dead." The original is too definite to admit of this. *But come*, &c. This shows the great faith of the ruler in Christ's power. His daughter was in a dying state, and yet he came with full assurance, that he should obtain help from Jesus. *Lay thine hand upon her*, according to thy custom. See N. on 8 : 3. *Shall live*, i. e. be restored to life. The child was actually dead, when Jesus came to the ruler's house, and as the father's language showed his expectation that it would be so, we cannot with some interpret these words, *shall be restored to health*.

19. *And Jesus arose*. With what readiness did he leave the feast, to go on this errand of mercy. *And so did his disciples*. The people also followed him in throngs (Mark 5 : 24 ; Luke 8 : 42).

20. *An issue of blood*. This disease rendered a person ceremonially unclean (Levit. 15 : 19-21), and was deemed almost incurable. According to Mark and Luke, she had spent all her means upon physicians, without receiving any relief. *Came behind him*. This timidity and delicacy of deportment, together with her strong faith, that the mere touch of his garment would effect a cure, invests this woman

hind *him*, and touched the hem of his garment.

21 For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

22 But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole.

q Lu. 7: 50, & 8: 48, & 17: 19, & 18: 42.

with no ordinary degree of interest. *The hem.* This was the fringe or tassel which Moses directed to be fastened upon the four corners of the outer garment, to remind the people of God's statutes.

21. *Within herself*, i. e. in her thoughts. *I shall be whole*; literally, *be saved*. Her disease was wearing away her life, and hence a permanent cure, such as her faith expected, was virtually a restoration to life.

22. *But Jesus turned him about.* Several beautiful and affecting incidents are related by Mark, a reference to which is reserved for the comments in their place. *Daughter.* See N. on v. 2. *Thy faith hath made thee whole*; literally, *hath saved thee*. Had it not been for her faith in our Lord's power and readiness to heal her, she would not have come to him for relief, nor have been in a frame of mind suitable to receive so great a blessing. In order to give prominence to this preparation of heart, our Savior attributes to it her cure. *Was made whole*; literally, *was saved*, both here and v. 21, the idea of deliverance from death being prominent. *From that hour*, i. e. from that very time.

23. *And when Jesus came, &c.* Mark and Luke say, that while he was talking with the woman, certain messengers from the ruler's house, announced to him the death of his daughter, but Jesus having reassured his faith, proceeded to his house, as here related. *The minstrels.* On the death of a relative or friend, the Orientals expressed their grief in loud cries and lamenta-

And the woman was made whole from that hour.

23 And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise,

24 He said unto them, 'Give place: for the maid is not dead,

r Ma. 5: 33; Lu. 8: 51. s See 2 Ch. 35: 25.  
t Ac. 20: 10.

tions. While the corpse remained in the house, the female relatives, in a separate apartment, sat on the ground in a circle, pouring out their grief, and chanting in mournful strains the virtues of the dead. This was accompanied, on the part of the nearest relative, with tearing the hair, wounding the face, arms, and breast, with her nails, and by other manifestations of grief. Musicians and singers were employed to sing dirges, accompanied by wind instruments. This is the class referred to in the text, by the term *minstrels* or *pipers*. *Making a noise.* Wailing and lamenting. The rank of the deceased doubtless called forth a more than ordinary expression of sorrow and sympathy. These tokens of grief showed that the damsel was really dead.

24. *Unto them*, i. e. the people who were thus weeping and lamenting. *Give place.* Their noisy grief was unsuited to the solemn exercise of the power, which he was about to exert; and probably the crowd was such, that he found it difficult to approach the damsel. His command was not uttered rudely, but with the calm dignity of one, who exercised rightful authority, and knew his power to impart happiness to the afflicted family. *For the maid, &c.* This is given as a reason why the people were commanded to withdraw. Their presence as mourners for the dead was unnecessary, for the maid was not dead but only asleep. Olshausen says, that in the light of the contrast which all three of the Evangelists repeat verbatim, "she is not dead but sleepeth," we have here no raising

but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.

25 But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took

her by the hand, and the maid arose.

26 And ¶ the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

¶ Or, *this fame.*

from the dead in the true sense of the words. He supposes that the maiden was in a deep trance. But Christ did not mean to affirm that she was not really dead, but that in reference to what was to take place, it was as though she was enjoying a peaceful sleep, from which he was about to awake her. A hint may also be intended that death is but a sleep, from which at the general resurrection all will be awakened. *And they laughed him to scorn; literally, derided him.* Not understanding his true meaning, and knowing well that the maid was dead (Luke 8 : 53), they looked upon him as one deserving only ridicule and contempt. They were doubtless not well pleased, that the ruler should apply to Jesus for aid, and were not sorry to find some occasion to vent upon him their hatred and contempt.

25. *But when the people were put forth.* It would appear from the verb, which signifies, *to forcibly put forth or thrust out*, that although the people withdrew as they were required, yet they did it with reluctance. The reason may have been, their unwillingness to obey one for whom they felt such contempt, and perhaps a wish to gratify their curiosity in respect to what was about to be done. Jesus put them forth, in order that the witnesses of the miracle, a competent number of whom were present, might have a more uninterrupted view of the transaction, than they could have had in a crowded room. Their sneers of unbelief had also rendered the people unworthy of being spectators of this stupendous miracle. *He went in to the chamber where the damsel lay dead.* According to Mark and Luke, none of his disciples save Peter, James, and John, were permitted to enter with him. The father and mother of the maiden were suffered also to be present.

*And took her by the hand.* It was his usual custom to connect the miracle with some act, in order to make it more palpable to the senses. See N. on 8 : 3. *And the maid arose.* According to Mark and Luke, our Lord spake to her and commanded her to arise. In its adaptation to impress upon the mind the idea of superhuman power, this miracle falls not far below the raising of the widow's son at Nain, or even of Lazarus, from the dead. Commentators have noticed the gradation in these three miracles. This damsel had just died; the widow's son had been dead some time, and was being carried forth for burial, when Jesus met the procession; Lazarus had lain in the grave four days, when he was called to life by our Lord. The circumstances of the present miracle are all in keeping with the dignity and solemnity of the occasion. The call for aid made upon Jesus by the anxious, tender-hearted father—the message which almost immediately followed, that the child was dead—the kind words of assurance, “be not afraid, only believe,” which Jesus addressed to the ruler—the wail of mourning which met their ears as they approached the house—the outburst of derision, with which our Lord's remark, that the damsel was only asleep, was received—the clearing of the room of all these unbelieving people, and the admission of only enough persons to be competent witnesses of the miracle—the calm and gentle tones of the command to arise, which penetrated the sleeper's ears, and brought her from the dead, to be once more a living form on earth, are all narrated in the most artless and simple manner, and yet with such graphic power, as to excite in the mind of the reader the deepest emotion.

26. This miracle so far transcended any thing they had seen or heard, that it became the theme of conversation,

27 ¶ And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, "*Thou son of David, have mercy on us.*"

28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them,

*u Ch. 15: 22, & 20: 30, 31; Ma. 10: 47, 48;  
Lu. 18: 38, 39.*

and was bruited abroad through all the land, and this too, notwithstanding that he had given strict charge that it should be told to no man, wishing to avoid all appearance of ostentation, and to give no occasion for the interference of his jealous enemies. *That land*, i. e. the region of country around Capernaum.

27-34. THE HEALING OF TWO BLIND MEN. A DUMB SPIRIT CAST OUT. *Capernaum.*

27. *When Jesus departed, &c.* The scene of this miracle was probably at or near Capernaum. The blind men may have followed him with their cry for aid, immediately on his leaving the ruler's house. Jesus permitted them to call upon him for some time without noticing them. This was not done through want of compassion for them, but to make trial of their faith and perseverance. *Thou son of David.* As this was an acknowledged title of the Messiah (see N. on 1: 1), it was a profession of the belief of these blind men in our Lord's Messiahship. Not having been able to see his miracles, they were obliged to rely on the testimony of others, and yet they were more ready to acknowledge him as the promised Messiah, than were many of those who saw his wondrous works. *Have mercy on us.* The Greek verb not only signifies a feeling of compassion for suffering, but an active readiness to remove its cause. It was a virtual request that Jesus should restore their sight.

28. *And when he came into the house,* i. e. the house which he occupied at Capernaum, or more probably some house in general, as opposed to the open air. All the way thither, these blind men followed him with their cries for relief, but apparently without moving

Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith, be it unto you.

30 And their eyes were opened;

him to pity. What a severe trial of their faith. Thus our Lord often defers blessings, which his heart is yearning to bestow upon his people, in order to test and strengthen their faith in his promises and protection. *The blind men came to him.* So pressing was their need, and such their confidence in his ability to heal them, that they followed him even into the house. They evinced a determination to take no refusal in regard to the boon they were seeking. *Believe ye, &c.* Their belief was attested in the cry with which they followed him through the street, and yet Christ required from them an open avowal of their faith in him, as an all-powerful Savior. *To do this*, i. e. to cure their blindness, implied in their appeal to his compassion. *Yea, Lord.* Simple, beautiful, and touching is this question and reply. No penance was enjoined by their Lord, no painful pilgrimage, no extraordinary acts of external devotion. The question was simply in effect, "Believe ye in me as your Savior?" To which they replied in humble love, "Yea, Lord;" and this is all that was required as preliminary to their marvellous cure.

29. *Then touched he their eyes,* according to his usual custom, when performing a miracle. See N. on 8: 3. *According to your faith.* Their measure of faith was determined by the measure of their cure, and was thus proved to be genuine. We are not, however, to infer from this example, that God's mercies are dealt out to us in exact proportion to our faith. His loving kindness to his people far transcends the highest exercise of their faith. But he requires of us a full and cordial belief in his word, and for all our short



and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, <sup>z</sup> See *that* no man know *it*.

31 <sup>y</sup> But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

32 ¶ <sup>a</sup> As they went out, be-

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 8: 4, & 12: 16, & 17: 9; Lu. 5: 14.  
<sup>y</sup> Ma. 7: 36. <sup>z</sup> See ch. 12: 22; Lu. 11: 14.

comings in this respect, we are to look for pardon, as for all our other spiritual imperfections.

30. *And their eyes were opened*, i. e. their sight was restored. The obstruction to their vision, whatever it might have been, was removed. Stier remarks, in reference to the miracles performed in the first period of our Lord's ministry, "that from having at first immediately granted the request to be healed, he begins gradually to prove and exercise the faith of the applicants." *Straitly charged*. Etymologically the word signifies, *to be indignant against, to be wroth at*; but here it signifies, *to admonish sternly, to strictly enjoin*, with the idea of anger at disobedience. *See that no man know it*. This is not to be pressed to its strictest sense. Those who knew the blind men could not be kept in ignorance, that they had been the subjects of an amazing cure. There must have been also, many spectators of the transaction. But the point of the command was, that they were not to be noisy heralds of their miraculous cure. There was to be no ostentatious display of the Savior's power, either in himself or in those who were the subjects of his mercy. He also enjoined secrecy, in order to avoid undue excitement among the people, which would have inevitably excited the jealousy of the rulers.

31. *But they, when they were departed, spread abroad, &c.* They were so transported with joy at their wonderful cure, that they spread it abroad wherever they went. In this they violated the express command of Christ, and perhaps in some way, of which we are not informed, received tokens of his displeasure. The same love, however, which caused them to see, may have pardoned

hold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.

33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.

34 But the Pharisees said, "He

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 12: 24; Ma. 8: 22; Lu. 11: 15.

this almost irrepressible outburst of their joy, at being thus suddenly introduced from a state of darkness to the vision of things around them.

32. *And as they went out*. This was indeed a day of marvellous wonders. While yet the blind men were going forth from the house, rejoicing in their cure, a dumb man possessed of a demon was brought to him. It is no argument against the reality of this possession, that the agency of the demon was exercised differently from theirs, who had possession of the men that dwelt among the tombs in Gadara. The power of all these demons was manifested in a way, which best subserved the purpose for which they entered into men. Some they rendered frantic with insanity, others they struck dumb, as in the case of the one here mentioned by Matthew. Sometimes they deprived their victims of sight, as well as the power of speech (see 12: 12). In one instance (17: 15) through demoniac possession, the person was afflicted with epileptic fits. There is nothing more strange or absurd in these varieties of demoniacal influence, than in a uniform mode of operation. Whenever more evil or misery would ensue from loss of reason, they exerted their agency to produce insanity. When this purpose could be subserved more fully, by taking from one the power of speech or sight, they brought these calamities upon their unhappy victims. Strange that these varied forms of evil influence, which might be expected from such malignant, powerful, and subtle foes of human happiness, should ever have been advanced, as a serious argument against demoniacal possession.

33. *And when the devil was cast out, &c.* This miracle is narrated in the briefest terms. The immediate act or

casteth out devils, through the prince of the devils.

35 <sup>b</sup> And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching

<sup>b</sup> Ma. 6: 6; Lu. 13: 22.      <sup>c</sup> Ch. 4: 23.

command of Jesus, by which the demon was expelled, is passed over in silence. The result only is given: "The dumb spake and the multitudes marvelled." *It was never so seen*, &c. Such displays of miraculous power were never seen in the whole history of Israel. The miracles wrought by Elijah, Elisha, and other Old Testament prophets, were far less striking than those performed on this memorable day.

34. *The Pharisees.* The same persons referred to in v. 11, who, instead of uniting in the praises of the multitude, when the dumb was made to speak, stood aloof, and blasphemously attributed his power to the agency of Satan. *Through*, i. e. by the aid of. *The prince of devils.* Satan or Beelzebub (see Matt. 12: 24), the prince of fallen angels. In Ephes. 2: 2, he is called "the prince of the power of the air," and in John 12: 31, "the prince of this world." It is worthy of remark that the Pharisees did not deny the dispossession of this demon, but wickedly attributed it to the agency of Satan. It appears to us wonderful, that they could have been so blinded to the character of Christ. But infidelity in every age has sought to account for the miracles of the Bible, by the most wild and absurd theories, to believe which it requires a thousand times greater stretch of credulity, than the miracles they seek to disprove. See further on this subject N. on 12: 24, where this charge of collusion with Satan is confuted by our Savior, and which, although related by Matthew, as though it happened after this, yet took place some time previous, when Jesus was making his second circuit in Galilee. This blasphemous charge must therefore be regarded as a repetition of that, which in 12: 24 was so triumphantly answered by our Lord.

the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness, and every disease among the people.

36 ¶ <sup>d</sup> But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with

<sup>d</sup> Ma. 6: 34.

35-38. A THIRD CIRCUIT IN GALILEE. Mark 6: 6-13.

35. It appears from 13: 54-58; Mark 6: 1-6, that Jesus went after this from Capernaum to his own city Nazareth, where he was a second time rejected. Afterwards he made his third circuit in Galilee, as here related. This verse differs but little from 4: 23 (on which see N.), referring to his first circuit in that region. *In their synagogues.* For the use of the pronoun referring to the inhabitants of the cities and villages, see N. on 4: 23.

36. *The multitudes*, who resorted to him to hear the word, and to be healed of their maladies. *He was moved with compassion*; literally, *his bowels yearned with compassion.* A strong expression of sympathy for the weary, fainting multitudes that followed him. *Because they fainted*; literally *were harassed, troubled.* *And were scattered*; more literally, *were cast out, abandoned, neglected*, referring to their deserted condition. They were following him from place to place, and not being able to carry a full supply of provisions with them, and many being too poor to buy food at the villages and towns, where Jesus tarried for a short time to preach the gospel, they became weak and dispirited, and were scattered here and there to obtain scanty supplies. They were like sheep having no shepherd, wandering about, and exposed to want, privation, and peril. Their depressed temporal condition, arising from their eagerness to hear the gospel, is referred to in this verse. But why were they so desirous to hear the word of life from the lips of Jesus? The answer to this question introduces the transition, which our Lord makes in v. 27, from their temporal to their spiritual wants. They had no religious teachers at home

compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, 'as sheep having no shepherd.

37 Then saith he unto his disciples, 'The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few.

38 <sup>o</sup> Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

*e* Nu. 27 : 17; 1 Ki. 22 : 17; Ez. 34 : 5; Ze. 10 : 2.  
*f* Lu. 10 : 2; Jno. 4 : 35. *g* 2 Th. 3 : 1.

to break to them the bread of life. So precious to them were the words they heard from Jesus, that they left their abodes, and although hungry and weary, they followed him from town to town to hear still more of his gracious words. Their eagerness to hear the gospel and the want of competent men to proclaim it, were compared by Christ to a large field, white for the harvest, with only here and there a laborer to gather in the rich products of the earth.

38. *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest.* The Lord of the harvest is Christ himself. To him his people in every age must look for a supply of pious, faithful, and competent ministers. There is no duty to which the Church of Christ is called, which requires more earnest and importunate prayer than this. Ministers are not made by institutions of learning, nor by high mental endowments. Natural talent, improved and strengthened by study, and enriched by the treasures of learning, is necessary, but will be worthless, unless animated and controlled by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which he has promised in answer to prayer. Laborers are to be sent forth trained in the school of Christ, as were the apostles. When they enter the field, duly prepared with intellectual culture, filled with the love and knowledge of Christ, burning with a desire to save souls, and willing to suffer for their Master, then they are laborers truly sent by Him into his harvest, and will be owned and accepted of him as such.

## CHAPTER X.

AND <sup>a</sup> when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power *against* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, <sup>b</sup> who is called Peter, and

*a* Ma. 3 : 13, 14, & 6 : 7; Lu. 6 : 13, & 9 : 1.  
*b* John 1 : 42.

## CHAPTER X.

1-42. THE TWELVE CHOSEN AND SENT FORTH. *Near Capernaum.* Mark 3 : 16-19; 6 : 7-11; Luke 6 : 13-16; 9 : 1-6.

1. As our Lord could not personally visit all the towns and cities of Galilee, he commissioned and sent forth the Twelve, in order that the people might hear the gospel in their own places of abode, and not be under the necessity of departing so far from home, as they had done to follow him, attended with such inconvenience to themselves and families. *Called unto him*, i. e. summoned them into his presence, to receive their commission. *Twelve.* See N. on Mark 3 : 14. *Gave them power, &c.* Christ not only had power in himself to work miracles, but he could impart it to others. This was in itself a stupendous miracle. The apostles received the gift, as one of the credentials of their divine mission. *Unclean spirits.* The devils were so called because they are the authors and instigators of all uncleanness, and defile the soul with evil thoughts and desires. *To cast them out* of the persons whom they possessed. This denotes the purpose, for which this power over unclean spirits was given to the apostles. It was limited and specific. *To heal.* The construction is : *he gave them* (power) *to heal.* *All manner of sickness, &c.* See N. on 4 : 23.

2. *Apostles*; literally, *those who are sent forth* as messengers, ambassadors, &c. In the New Testament the term is confined to the Twelve, who were

Andrew his brother; James *the son of Zebedee*, and John his brother;

3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James, *the son of Alpheus*,

chosen by Christ to attend his ministry, and propagate the gospel after his death. As they are now to receive their commission, Matthew gives their names, which, in Mark and Luke, are given with their call and ordination on the mountain. See Mark 3: 13-19; Luke 6: 12-16. *First, Simon who is called Peter.* He received this surname at his first interview with his Lord, while in attendance on John's baptism (John 1: 43). It was representative of his boldness and firmness in the cause of his master. He was of an ardent and impetuous temperament, prompt in action, and from his age and personal

influence, and priority of call to the ministry, was placed first in the order of names. But neither this circumstance, nor the lead which he took in the transactions immediately following the ascension of Christ, furnishes any ground for the notion of his official supremacy over his fellow apostles. See further on this point, in N. on 16: 18, 19. It may be remarked here, that the order of names is so diverse in the different Evangelists, that no difference of rank is to be drawn from these registers of names. The following table taken from Alford, will show the agreement and differences.

	Matthew 10: 2.	Mark 3: 16.	Luke 6: 14.	Acts 1: 13.
1	Simon Peter.			
2	Andrew.	James.	Andrew.	James.
3	James.	John.	James.	John.
4	John.	Andrew.	John.	Andrew.
5	Philip.			
6	Bartholomew.			Thomas.
7	Thomas.	Matthew.		Bartholomew.
8	Matthew.	Thomas.		Matthew.
9	James the son of Alpheus.			
10	Lebbeus.	Thaddeus.		Simon Zelotes.
11	Simon the Canaanite.		Judas the brother of James.	
12	Judas Iscariot			Vacant.

*Andrew his brother.* He was first a disciple of John the Baptist (John 1: 37-40), but came to Jesus when he was

pointed out by John, as the Lamb of God. Olshausen remarks, that he stands much in the background throughout



and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus ;

4 <sup>c</sup> Simon the Canaanite, and

<sup>c</sup> Lu. 6 : 15 ; Ac. 1 : 13.

the gospel history. *James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother.* They were surnamed *Boanerges, sons of thunder* (Mark 3 : 17), on account of their powerful preaching, or their stern denunciations against sin. See 1 John 1 : 8, 10 ; 2 : 4, 9 ; 3 : 8, 15 ; 4 : 20, etc., where the bold, uncompromising, decided spirit of John is very manifest. Of these brothers, James was slain by Herod (Acts 12 : 2), while John lived to a very great age, and died a natural death.

3. *Philip*, a native of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter, James and John. He was called by our Lord, the day after Andrew's visit, just referred to. He is not to be confounded with Philip the Evangelist, spoken of in Acts 6 : 5 ; 21 : 8. *Bartholomew* (i. e. son of Talmi) is probably the patronymic of Nathanael (John 1 : 46), as Peter was sometimes called Barjonas, son of Jonas. *Thomas*, i. e. a twin, in reference to which he was also called Didymus. *Matthew the publican*, called also Levi. He was the writer of the Gospel bearing his name, and his humility, and modesty are seen, in his adding to his name the term of reproach here found, but omitted in all the other lists of the apostles. He is commonly supposed to have died a martyr's death in Ethiopia. *James the son of Alpheus.* In Galatians 1 : 19, he is called "the Lord's brother." This has been explained in various ways. Epiphanius says that Alpheus or Cleophas (John 19 : 25) was brother to Joseph the reputed father of our Savior, and that he dying without issue, Joseph took his wife, and became the father of James, who in this way might be called the son of Cleophas. Jerome says that he was the son of Marie, sister to the mother of Jesus, and in this way was called the Lord's brother, cousins in ancient times being frequently so called. But see N. on 13 : 53. He was called "James the Less," either because he was younger than the other James, or

Judas <sup>d</sup> Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

5 These twelve, Jesus sent

<sup>d</sup> John 13 : 26.

smaller in stature, or called later to be an apostle. Soon after Stephen's death, he seems to have been appointed a kind of superintendent of the church of Jerusalem, and spent his days there. It would appear from Josephus, that it was he, whom the high priest Ananus put to death, before the arrival of Albinus who succeeded Festus. He refers to him as "James the brother of Jesus who was called Christ." *Lebbeus, whose surname, &c.* He was the brother of James the Less (Jude 1), and cousin to our Lord. Olshausen thinks that this Judas, with the cognomen Lebbeus or Thaddeus, was a different person from Judas the brother of James.

4. *Simon the Canaanite.* In Luke, *Simon called Zelotes.* The former is the Hebrew, the latter the Greek word for *zealot*. He probably belonged to the sect called Zealots, from their professions of zeal for the Mosaic institutions. Some critics take *Canaanite* to signify, that he was from Cana of Galilee, and suppose that the epithet *Zelotes* was given him from his zeal in embracing the gospel of Jesus Christ, or from the sect of Zealots to which he belonged. *Judas Iscariot.* So called from Carioth or Kerioth, a town of Judah (Josh. 15 : 25), where he was born. *Who also betrayed him ;* more literally, *who even delivered him up to his enemies.* This clause is added to the traitor's name in Mark, and in Luke also, with the slight variation, *who even became a traitor ;* a mark of infamy affixed to his name, which the ages of eternity will not suffice to remove.

5. *Jesus sent forth.* Mark says that he sent them forth, "by two and two," a practice which has been generally and wisely followed in missionary enterprises, it being found productive of comfort, good counsel, and success, especially if the field is one of opposition or persecution. *And commanded them, saying.* The commission here given,

forth, and commanded them, saying, 'Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

e Ch. 4: 15. f See 2 Ki. 17: 24; Jno. 4: 9, 20.  
g Ch. 15: 24; Ac. 13: 46.

although for a missionary tour, quite limited in comparison with that in which they were to be engaged after the death of their Lord, contains directions, instructions, cautions, consolations, which they were to carry with them to the end of life. Some portions seem to refer directly to the great work they were to perform, and the trials they were to endure, after Christ's resurrection and ascension. This will be seen more clearly when the passages are examined in detail. We are not, however, to think, from this twofold reference, that the commission was not given continuously. It bears evident marks of having been delivered at one time, although portions of it may have been repeated on other occasions, as on the sending forth of the *Seventy* in Luke 10: 2-16. The discourse has a threefold division, vs. 5-15 constituting the first portion, and relating to subjects connected with the special missionary tour upon which they were about to go; vs. 16-23, comprising the second division (on which see N. on v. 16); and vs. 24-42, the third division, the scope of which is explained under v. 24. *Go not* (on your mission) *into the way of the Gentiles*, i. e. into any way leading to Gentile nations, the same as to say, *go not to the Gentiles*. The time had not yet come, when the rich treasures of the gospel were to be committed to them. *And into any city of the Samaritans*. As the word *any* is not in the original, some have referred this prohibition only to the city of Samaria. But the article in the original would then have been required before the word *city*, and therefore the common translation is the correct one. The Samaritans were the descendants of those heathen colonists, sent by Shalmanezar, king of Assyria

6 <sup>o</sup> But go rather to the <sup>h</sup> lost sheep of the house of Israel.

7 <sup>i</sup> And as ye go, preach, <sup>k</sup> The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

<sup>h</sup> Is. 53: 6; Je. 50: 6, 17; Ez. 34: 5, 6, 16; 1 Pe. 2: 25. <sup>i</sup> Lu. 9: 2. <sup>k</sup> Ch. 3: 2, & 4: 17; Lu. 10: 9.

(2 Kings 17: 24) into the land, after the taking of Samaria and the leading away of Israel into captivity. With these were mingled some Israelites, who, being too few and obscure to awaken any apprehensions of their fomenting a rebellion, were therefore permitted to remain in the land. Between this mongrel people and the Jews, there existed the most bitter hatred, which prevented all intercourse. *Enter ye not*. This prohibition was removed, Acts 1: 8. They were judicially cut off for a season from the privileges of the gospel, although their readiness to receive it appears to have been greater than that of the Jews. See John 4: 39-42; Acts 8: 1, 5, 8.

6. *But go rather to the lost sheep* (i. e. sheep having gone astray) *of the house, &c.* The Jews having wandered away from the spiritual worship of God, and being given to the observance of vain ceremonies, are aptly compared to sheep scattered abroad, with no shepherd to feed them or protect them from the perils to which they were exposed. To them our Lord would have his gospel first proclaimed. But when they as a people rejected him, the Gentiles became the inheritors of the promises. Thus it will be until the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in, when the blindness, which in part hath happened to Israel shall be removed, and all ungodliness shall be turned away from Jacob. See Rom. 11: 1-28. *House of Israel*. A Hebraism for *people of Israel*.

7. *Preach*. See N. on 3: 1. *The kingdom of heaven is at hand* (see N. on 3: 2; 4: 17). This is somewhat different from their final instruction, in Matt. 28: 29; Mark 16: 15. This was preparatory, that final and complete. The kingdom of God had then fully

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: 'freely ye have received, freely give.

l Ac. 8: 18, 20. m 1 Sa. 9: 7; Ma. 6: 8; Lu. 9: 3, & 10: 4, & 22: 35.

come, the great Atoning Sacrifice had been made, the door of salvation was open for all, and the gospel was to be preached to every creature.

8. *Heal the sick, &c.* Had they not possessed these credentials, they would have been regarded as madmen, passing through the country with such a proclamation. The miracles they wrought, arrested attention, and showed that although obscure and unlettered men, they were acting under a higher than human authority. *Raise the dead.* This may refer to what took place after the ascension of our Lord (see Acts 9: 40; 20: 10-12), as we have no evidence that the apostles wrought any miracle of this sort, at least previous to that time. In many ancient versions, this clause is not found, and hence some judicious critics are disposed to doubt its genuineness. *Freely ye have received, &c.* As the gifts with which they were endowed, had been freely bestowed upon them, in like manner, they were to make free and liberal use of them, in relieving the ill, and administering to the wants of their fellow-men. They were not to make a trade of their miraculous gifts, as the Jewish exorcists did of their pretended power to cast out devils.

9. *Provide neither gold, &c.* They were to make no provisions for their support, nor feel any solicitude in respect to it, but to go forth, trusting in that God in whose service they were engaged. Reference is had in the words, "gold, silver, and brass," to the various coins of money in use among the Jews. The prohibition extended to money of every description. *In your purses; literally, girdles.* In the belt was a pouch in which money and other valuables were carried, a practice even now observed in Oriental countries, where the flowing robes are confined with girdles.

9 "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; 10 Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes,

n See Ma. 6: 8.

10. *Nor scrip for your journey, i. e.* provisions, the bag or wallet in which food was carried being put, by a common figure of speech, for the food itself. *Two coats.* The principle of taking only what was of immediate use applies also here. A change of garments is what is forbidden, and not the wearing of two coats, which was generally practised by the ancients when making a journey. The outer garment or cloak is not here referred to. See N. on 5: 40. *Neither shoes, i. e.* sandals (see N. on 3: 13). As in Mark (6: 9) they are permitted to be shod with sandals, and as extensive journeyings would be well nigh impossible, without something under the feet to protect them from sharp stones, thorns, and roughnesses of the way, we are to refer this prohibition in Matthew, to the supplying themselves with a second pair, in case the first gave out in the journey. This accords with the direction as given in Luke (10: 4), and with the previous injunction against carrying an extra coat. Some however think that the prohibition refers to a sort of strong shoes used in long journeys, or the Roman *calceus*, a shoe which covered the whole foot. But this does not comport with the context, as does the explanation above given. *Nor yet staves.* This is reconciled with Mark (6: 8), by referring the prohibition to an extra staff, on the same general principle, that no provision was to be made for future wants or contingencies. Bloomfield, Dr. Robinson, Alford and many other judicious critics adopt the singular, *staff*, as the true reading. Bloomfield and Alford suppose the injunction to be against providing themselves with a staff for the journey, it being implied that they might take one if they had it. But a staff and pouch were anciently deemed so indispensable to travellers, that I am not much inclined to this

nor yet staves: ° for the workman is worthy of his meat.

11 <sup>p</sup> And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who

o Lu. 10: 7; 1 Co. 9: 7, &c.; 1 Ti. 5: 18.  
p Lu. 10: 8.

mode of reconciling the apparently diverse statements of Matthew and Mark. It is not, as Alford thinks, absurd that a traveller in those times should take an extra staff, to provide against the one first used being lost or broken. *For the workman, &c.* A proverbial expression, embodying the principle of justice, that all service is entitled to a remuneration from those to whom it is rendered. There is here a twofold application; one, that God, in whose higher service they are engaged, will not overlook their wants and necessities; the other, that their fellow-men for whose benefit they are laboring, may be reasonably expected to give them that support to which their services are justly entitled. *Meat* is generically put here for both food and raiment. Robinson gives it the sense of *stipend, hire*, from the parallel passage in 1 Tim. 5: 18. The general sentiment is plain, that all voluntary service is entitled to a fair remuneration. This may serve as a key to the foregoing directions. They were to take no extra clothing or other necessaries, but were to look for a supply of their wants, as they might arise, from those to whom they were ministering in spiritual things. But we are not to press this direction to make no provision against future wants, to a literal application to ministers in our day, although the general principle of self-denial and trust in God for the supply of their wants, is manifestly taught.

11. *Ye shall enter* to preach the gospel. *Worthy* by their piety and hospitality to entertain you. Some commentators prefer no ellipsis, but refer the expression to absolute worth or goodness. But this is contrary to the general usage of the word, and unsuited to the context. Olshausen refers it to the poor and needy in spirit spoken

in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

12 And when ye come into a house, salute it.

13 <sup>q</sup> And if the house be worthy,

q Lu. 10: 5.

of in 5: 3, to whom alone could the proclamation of the Redeemer be *good news*. See 22: 8; Luke 7: 4; Rev. 3: 4. *And there* (i. e. in the house of the worthy person) *abide till ye go thence* (i. e. out of the city). This was an important and timely direction. A frequent change of place from one family to another, would seem to imply that they were difficult to be suited, or that they were seeking places, where they would receive the most sumptuous entertainment. They were to take suitable precaution against becoming the guests of an ill-regulated and unworthy family, which would prove a hinderance rather than an aid to their work. But having once selected their lodging-place, they were to remain there all the time of their sojourn in the place, in order to avoid the appearance of being over-solicitous for their own comfort, while engaged on so important a mission.

12. *When ye come into a house*; literally *the house*, as opposed to the street, road, or open air; *any house*, but not the house of the one with whom they were to abide, for his house had previously been found worthy. The word *house* is here employed for the family residing in it. The formula of salutation is given in Luke 10: 5. Among the Orientals, salutations were more formal and strictly observed than with us. Our Lord would not have his disciples neglect the usual forms of politeness and friendship. A morose and boorish disregard of the usages of refined society, finds no license, either in the conduct of Christ, or his instructions to his disciples.

13. *If the house be worthy*, i. e. have occupants who have shown themselves worthy of your salutation, by the hospitality and kindness with which they receive you. *Let your peace come upon*



let your peace come upon it: ' but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

14 \* And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, 'shake off the dust of your feet.

r Ps. 85: 13. s Ma. 6: 11; Lu. 9: 5, & 10: 10, 11.  
t Ne. 5: 13; Ac. 13: 51, & 18: 6.

*it.* The word *peace* is not used here in its restricted sense, as opposed to war and contention, but implies happiness, prosperity, every kind of good, which in the terms of the salutation were to rest upon the household. This shows that such salutations were not an empty form, lightly and thoughtlessly bestowed. They were real benedictions, uttered by the apostles in the name of their Lord, and conferring blessings upon those who were worthy to receive them. *Return unto you*, i. e. become void and ineffective. See Isa. 54: 11. Both this and the preceding imperative are used for the future, *shall come upon it—shall return to you.*

14. *Whosoever shall not receive you*, i. e. tender you the rites of hospitality and receive you with kindness. *Nor hear your words*, with a friendly and obedient spirit. Reference seems to be had to open contemners of the gospel message. It cannot be supposed that they performed the act of shaking off the dust from their feet, at every person who did not obey from his heart the gospel, or in other words, was not immediately converted. *That house or city*, i. e. the house or city of such a despiser of the gospel. *Shake off the dust of your feet.* A better collocation would be: *shake from your feet the dust*; literally, *the fine dust*, such as is raised by the wind, and used here to emphatically represent the shaking off of even the smallest particles of dust. This was a symbolical act, by which the Jews disclaimed all intercourse with those whom they deemed heathenish or profane. When they returned from any Gentile country, as they passed the boundaries, they stopped and carefully

15 Verily, I say unto you, " It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

16 ¶ " Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of

u Ch. 11: 22, 24. w Lu. 10: 3.

cleaned their shoes from all dust of the polluted region, which adhered to them. In the case of the apostles, it was a strong and expressive symbol of the rejection of those Jews, who would not acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. Alford well remarks that this verse forms a kind of introduction to the next portion of the discourse, where the future mission to the Gentiles is treated of.

15. *It shall be more tolerable, &c.* i. e. the people of Sodom and Gomorrah can better bear their punishment, on account of its comparative lightness. Those cities have been in every age regarded, as the type or embodiment of wickedness. But our Lord here solemnly declares that their guilt, great as it was, shall be far exceeded by those cities, which deliberately reject him or his accredited messengers. This is on the obvious principle, that sins are heinous, in proportion to the light and privileges enjoyed by those who commit them. *In the day of judgment.* Some endeavor to deprive this expression of its high import, by referring it to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, which was preceded by the devastation of the towns and cities of Galilee. But as Whitby well observes, that is usually referred to, as *the day of vengeance.* And what has Sodom or Gomorrah to do with the miseries inflicted by the Romans upon the Jewish nation? The expression manifestly refers to the great day of final account. *That city*, i. e. those in the city who have been guilty of rejecting Christ. Every person on that day will be judged and rewarded, according to the nature of his own personal deeds. The word

wolves: <sup>v</sup> be ye therefore wise as serpents, and <sup>a</sup> harmless as doves.

17 But beware of men: for

*y* Ro. 16: 19; Ep. 5: 15. *z* 1 Co. 11: 20; Phi. 2: 15.

*city* is therefore used as a general term, embracing such wicked persons in it as are here doomed.

16. By a natural and easy transition, our Lord proceeds to speak of the more general duties and trials of his apostles after his crucifixion and ascension. This constitutes the second general division of the instructions here given (see N. on v. 5). He gradually becomes more general in his directions and predictions, until in vs. 24-42, he speaks directly to his ministers of all times to the end of the world. *As sheep in the midst of wolves.* No words could better express the harmlessness and inoffensiveness of the apostles, and the cruel and malignant spirit of their persecutors. The construction of the Greek preposition here used (see N. on 3: 6) is such, as to impart to this sentence the additional idea of their remaining among wolves, that is, that their labors were to be continued among men represented by these cruel and rapacious animals. *Therefore*, i. e. in consequence of your helpless exposure to such virulent enemies.

*Wise as serpents*; literally, *the serpents, the doves*, these expressions being generic, and the same as *the serpent, the dove*. Amongst almost all the ancient nations, the serpent was an emblem of wisdom. This may have arisen, in part at least, from the traditionary account of its share in tempting man from allegiance to his Maker, or from its craft in shunning danger as well as taking its prey. Reference is here had, in a good sense, to its prudence and sagacity in shunning danger. *Harmless as doves*. A beautiful and appropriate simile. The dove is universally taken as the symbol of gentleness and harmless innocence. Their only means of defence is prudence to shun, and innocence to disarm danger. The wisdom of the serpent and harmlessness

<sup>a</sup> they will deliver you up to the councils, and <sup>b</sup> they will scourge you in their synagogues;

*a* Ch. 24: 9; Ma. 13: 9; Lu. 12: 11, & 21: 12.  
*b* Ac. 5: 40.

of the dove, would be peculiarly necessary for the apostles, in the circumstances referred to in v. 19. Olshausen, by comparing this with Matt. 3: 16, makes purity of soul, that which is here symbolized by the dove. But the antithesis is more accurately marked by the usual rendering. The combination of the qualities here referred to, makes a person of rare excellence, yet if one only can be developed on any occasion, harmlessness and innocence are far to be preferred to wisdom.

17. Our Savior here expands the direction given in v. 16. *Beware of men*; literally, *the men*, used generically of wicked men, viz. those with whom the disciples might come in contact. See N. on v. 16. Alford refers their need of the wisdom of the serpent, to this cautious watchfulness against wicked men, and the simplicity of the dove, to the direction, *take no thought*, &c. in v. 19. *For they will deliver you up to the councils*, i. e. bring you before the councils. These were the smaller courts in Palestine (see Deut. 16: 18) subordinate to the Sanhedrim, which grand council is however included here in the idea. This clause stands as a reason why the apostles are to beware of men, viz. their persecuting spirit. The prediction was literally fulfilled in the early days of the church, when the apostles were brought before the Sanhedrim, examined and scourged. See Acts 4: 5-22; 5: 40. It had a fulfillment also in subsequent persecutions, when the followers of Jesus were dragged before civil tribunals, and condemned to imprisonment, torture, and death. *Scourge you*. Scourging was a punishment under the Mosaic law (Deut. 25: 23). The criminal was stretched upon the ground, and blows not to exceed forty were applied to his back. In order that the number of blows might not ex-

18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

19 <sup>d</sup> But when they deliver you

*c* Ac. 12 : 1, & 24 : 10, & 25 : 7, 23; 2 Ti. 4 : 16.  
*d* Ma. 13 : 11, 12, 13; Lu. 12 : 11, & 21 : 14, 15.

ceed the prescribed limits, the later Jews fixed it at thirty-nine, using a whip with three lashes, so as to inflict three stripes at one blow. Thirteen blows made up the thirty-nine stripes. See 2 Cor. 11 : 24. *In their synagogues.* See Matt. 23 : 24; Acts 22 : 19. In the time of Christ, as in after times, the Jews kept their courts in the synagogues.

18. *And*; literally, *moreover also*, the transition being to something still further to be considered. *Brought* for trial and punishment. *Governors.* These were the proconsuls, legates, and presidents, sent by the Roman emperors to exercise jurisdiction in the provinces of the empire. Pilate, Felix, and Festus were governors or procurators. Before these and other Roman governors, the Jewish Christians were frequently summoned. *And kings.* Such as Herod the Great and his successors, who, although honored with the regal title, were ethnarchs and tetrarchs, dependent upon the Roman emperor for dignity and authority. *For my sake, or on account of me,* i. e. in consequence of being my followers, and the preachers of my word. *For a testimony against them* of the truth of the gospel, and of the divine mission of Christ. *Them,* i. e. the Jews, since the governors and kings are to be included among the Gentiles. These two sets of persecutors are distinctly referred to, in this and the preceding verse. *And to the Gentiles.* Some of the most noble opportunities to preach the gospel of Christ, were furnished in these trials before kings and princes. Thus the persecuting spirit with which Christianity was sought to be crushed, was the means of its more rapid growth and dissemination. This was true also of the great persecutions which the Christians suffered under the Roman empe-

up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

20 <sup>f</sup> For it is not ye that speak,

*e* Ex. 4 : 12; Je. 1 : 7. *f* 2 Sa. 23 : 2; Ac. 4 : 8, & 6 : 10; 2 Ti. 4 : 17.

rors. The zeal and boldness with which they preached Christ, and their constancy amidst the severest sufferings, wrought powerfully in their favor, and induced many even of their persecutors to embrace the gospel. Thus the "blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church."

19. The obscure and humble condition of the apostles would naturally fill them with agitation and alarm, at being brought into the presence of these potentates, and our Lord proceeds to instruct them, as to their behavior and manner of defence, before these high earthly tribunals. *But when they deliver you up.* See N. on. v. 17. *Take no thought.* The meaning is not fully given in our common translation, which would seem to preclude the common exercise of thought on these important occasions. The idea of great anxiety and solicitude, as to the means and manner of defending themselves, and an undue reliance on their own unaided powers, are what is forbidden. Christ would have them rely on him, for wisdom and strength in these trying exigencies. *How* refers to the manner, and *what*, to the matter of their defence. *For it shall be given you, &c.* This is the reason why they were not to be anxiously solicitous. With the promise of aid from so divine a source, it was of little comparative consequence, whether they were brought before some petty magistrate, or the Roman Cæsar. *In that same hour,* i. e. in the hour of their trial. This promise has been often verified, when the servants of Christ have stood, to human view, defenceless before the mighty of the earth, whose word could consign them to the stake, the wild beasts, or the dungeons and tortures of the inquisition. Even the female sex, who on other occasions

but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

21 <sup>9</sup> And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the

*9* Mt. 7: 6; ver. 35, 36; Lu. 21: 16.

would have shrunk with dread from public exposure; have been endowed with a boldness and power in professing the faith of Christ, which has astonished and confounded their adversaries.

20. *For it is not you that speak; literally, you are not* (i. e. will not be) *the speakers.* The physical act of speaking is not here referred to, but the sentiments uttered, which were the suggestions and teachings of the Spirit, according to promise. This is very evident from the following words: *which speaketh in you*, i. e. prompts and inspires your thoughts, and assists in their delivery. Some translate, *it is not you that speak so much as the Spirit*, &c. making, as Bloomfield calls it, a sort of comparative negative. But there is no necessity for this, since the above explanation meets the wants of the passage, as well as its construction. *Your Father.* "It is to be observed that our Lord, in speaking to his disciples, never says *our* Father, but either *my* Father or *your* Father, or both conjoined; never leaving it to be inferred that God is in the same sense his Father and our Father." Alford. In the great struggle between holiness and sin, light and darkness, the creature is lost sight of, and it is God alone who is represented as speaking and acting. Men are only his subordinate agents and instruments.

21. The disciples are taught, however, to expect little from their innocence, and the justice of their cause. Not only would they have to meet the infuriated malice of those, from whom they might expect no natural sympathy, but even their nearest friends and relatives would become their most bitter persecutors. How truly this prediction was accomplished, those need not be

children shall rise up against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to death.

22 And <sup>4</sup>ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: 'but

*4* Lu. 21: 17. *i* Da. 12: 12, 13; ch. 24: 13; Ma. 13: 13.

told, who have any acquaintance with ecclesiastical history. Such was the hostility to the religion of Christ, that the closest bonds of friendship and relationship were severed, and the most tender sympathies paralyzed. Husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters became mutual spies and informers, and looked unmoved upon the dying agonies of those, whom they once held dear, but whom, through hatred to Christianity, they had betrayed to death. *Shall deliver up.* In various ways this was done. Some would inform against their relatives, others would betray their hiding-places, or cause them to be seized, when attempting to flee to some place of comparative security. This was doubtless sometimes done with a hope, that the prospect of death under such appalling forms, would cause them to abjure Christ. But it was in general the legitimate fruit of heathenism, the portraiture of which is drawn in Rom. 1: 21-32, one feature being contained in the words, "without natural affection."

22. *Shall be hated.* An active persecuting hatred is here intended. *All men*, i. e. the greater portion of men, as in the nature of the case it cannot mean the whole. If taken in its strict sense, it must refer to the class of persecutors just mentioned. Alford interprets: *all else but yourselves.* *For my name's sake.* Doddridge translates: *for the sake of my name*, i. e. through the odium attached to the name of Christ. But it is better to regard the name as put for the person, *for my sake*, i. e. for your attachment to me. A vivid picture of the opposition and hatred, which the cause of Christ has ever met from an ungodly and unbelieving world. *But he that endureth to the end*, i. e. to the termination of his



he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

23 But <sup>k</sup> when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you,

<sup>k</sup> Ch. 2: 13, & 4: 12, & 12: 15; Ac. 8: 1, & 9: 25, & 14: 6.

trials and persecutions, either by death or by deliverance in some other way. There is undoubtedly here a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem and the downfall of the Jewish persecuting power, which was to close up the persecutions of the apostolical period, at least so far as Judaism was concerned, just as the day of judgment, of which the destruction of Jerusalem was a type, would put an end, throughout the moral universe, to all opposition to truth and righteousness. But the end spoken of, in special reference to the persons addressed by our Lord, is most unquestionably that point or period in their lives, when they shall have passed the fiery ordeal of suffering, and shown themselves worthy and approved servants of Christ. This point with many would not be reached until the hour of their death. *Shall be saved*; literally, *the same* (and no other) *shall be saved* (see 24: 13), i. e. rewarded with life everlasting. It is singular that any should refer this to temporal salvation, and the previous words, *endureth to the end*, to surviving the destruction of Jerusalem. If this were the sense, the whole passage would be reduced to the flat declaration, that whoever outlived the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, would be saved from the death of such as were involved in its ruin. How is the word of God oftentimes rendered absurd and meaningless, by the efforts of men to interpret its plain declarations to suit their own theories. These words will receive further notice under 24: 13, where they recur again.

23. In view of these persecutions, our Lord proceeds to lay down a general rule for the guidance of his disciples. *But when they persecute you, &c.* They were not to court martyrdom, or make no effort to save their life.

Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, 'till the Son of man be come.

24 <sup>m</sup> The disciple is not above

<sup>l</sup> Ch. 16: 28. <sup>m</sup> Lu. 6: 40; Jno. 13: 16, & 15: 20.

On the contrary, where no great principle was to be abandoned, and no great end to be answered by remaining in the face of persecution and death, they were to flee to another city of comparative safety. *In this city*, i. e. in any city where you happen to be, opposed here to *another* in the next clause. *Ye shall not have gone over* (literally, *finished*) *the cities of Israel*, i. e. shall not have finished passing through the cities to preach the gospel. *Till the Son of man be come*. This can hardly refer, as some think, to an intimation on the part of Christ, that he would follow and join them in their tour, for it is said (Matt. 6: 30-44; Luke 9: 10-17) that the apostles returned to Jesus with an account of what they had done. Neither are we told of any persecutions, by which on this tour they were driven from one city into another. On the other hand, the coming of the Son of man, here spoken of, cannot refer to his coming to judge the world at the last day, for it is to take place before the cities of Judea have all been visited with the proclamation of the gospel. It must therefore be referred to his coming to destroy Jerusalem, which, as a type of his final coming to take vengeance on his enemies, is spoken of in a secondary sense, as *a coming* of Christ. In this sense the words are equivalent to *the end*, spoken of in the preceding verse. The logical connection of this clause with what proceeds, marks it as a ground of encouragement. They had no occasion to fear these persecutions, for whoever endured to *the end* should be saved, and *the end* (i. e. the downfall of the Jewish persecuting power denoted by the coming of Christ) would come, before they should have gone fully over the cities and towns of

his master, nor the servant above his lord.

25 It is enough for the disciple

n Ch. 12 : 24 ; Ma. 3 : 22 ; Lu. 11 : 15 ; Jno. 8 : 48, 52.

Judea, with the proclamation of the gospel.

24. From this verse to the end of the chapter, the position, duties, trials and rewards of all Christ's disciples are the subject of discourse. It constitutes the third and last division of the instructions here given. The first and second divisions are local and temporal, although in part applicable to Christ's ministers in every age and country. This third portion embraces a range, as extensive as the world and lasting as time. It is the largest, and the weightiest portion of the chapter. The following synopsis, for which I am indebted to Alford, will help to understand the general train of thought. It treats of, 1, the conflicts (vs. 24, 25), duties (vs. 26-28), and encouragements (vs. 29-31) of all Christ's disciples ; 2, the certain issue of the fight in victory, the confession by Christ of those who confess him, set in strong light by contrast of those who deny him (vs. 32, 33), the necessity of the conflict to victory, by the nature of Christ's mission (vs. 34-36), the kind of self-devotion which he requires (vs. 37-39), concluding with the solemn assurance, that no reception of his messengers for his sake, nor even the smallest labor of love for him, shall pass without its final reward. Thus we are carried on to the end of time and of the course of the church.

*The disciple is not (or no disciple is) above, &c.* A proverbial saying, here used to show that Christ's disciples could not expect exemption from persecution, when their master had suffered from it. *Above* in rank and worth. *Teacher.* See N. on 9 : 11. *Nor the servant above his lord.* A parallelism in sentiment with the preceding clause. The Jewish proverbs have the form of Hebrew poetry, which took the shape of clauses parallel with, or opposed to

that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If <sup>n</sup> they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more *shall*

each other, or having some form of construction and resemblance in common. A reference to the Psalms and Proverbs of the Old Testament will illustrate this.

25. *It is enough for the disciple, &c.* The disciple should not complain, if he received the same treatment as his master, but should be content with his lot, and even rejoice in sharing the sufferings of one, so far above him in rank and dignity. This proverb is found in a somewhat different connection, in Luke 6 : 40 ; John 13 : 16. *Be as his master* in consideration and treatment. *If they have called, &c.* See Matt. 9 : 34 ; 12 : 24 ; Mark 3 : 22 ; Luke 11 : 15. *The master of the house.* The head of the family. The expression conforms to the previously expressed relationship of master and servant. *Beelzebub* ; literally, *lord of flies.* See 2 Kings 1 : 2. The reading here should be *Beelzebub*, i. e. *lord of dung.* By altering a single letter, the Jews changed the name from one of honor, *fly-god, fly-expeller*, to one of contempt, and transferred it to Satan the prince of demons. Dr. Jahn erroneously finds in this word an allusion to the ancient astrological division of the heavens into various apartments or habitations, to each of which was assigned a ruler or president. The etymological signification, which he gives to Beelzebub, is *lord of the (celestial) dwellings* (see Eph. 2 : 2), i. e. prince of the astrological deities. This rests on the same etymological basis as the other, the word compounded in Beelzebub, signifying both *a ball of dung*, and *a dwelling.* But as the one is an epithet of contempt, and the other of honor, we cannot hesitate to affix to it the meaning of the former. *How much more.* The argument *a fortiori* (see N. on 5 : 15). If Christ, who came with such ample credentials of his divine mission,

they call them of his household?

26 Fear them not therefore: ° for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

o Ma. 4: 22; Lu. 8: 17, & 12: 2, 3.

was set at nought and regarded as an impersonation of Beelzebub, *how much more* would they charge upon his disciples collusion with the prince of darkness. *Those of his household*, i. e. his domestics and retainers.

26. Our Lord now addresses his disciples with words of encouragement, as in the latter clause of v. 22. *Fear them not therefore*. This clause is an inference from the preceding verse. If they as servants of Christ suffered in his cause, they had no reason to fear their enemies. Their community with him in reproach, would ensure to them a community in his triumph and glory. *For there is nothing covered*, &c. Under this proverbial expression, with which Bloomfield compares the well-known saying, "*Magna est veritas, et prevalebit*," *truth is mighty and will prevail*, the disciples are comforted with the assurance, that their integrity and innocence will in due time become manifest, and they will be the subjects of honor and praise, as they are now of persecution and contempt.

27. As their integrity was in due time to be made known and acknowledged, so the instructions of Christ, which in comparative privacy he was giving them from time to time, however offensive they might be to men, were to be openly and courageously proclaimed to the world. *Darkness and light* are here used figuratively, for *in private* and *in public*. So in the proverbial expression which follows, *in the ear* (i. e. whispered into the ear) is a well-known term for *privately*, and upon the *house-tops* for *publicly*. The house-tops or roofs were flat, and the members of a family with their friends, there enjoyed the cool of the day in pleasant conversation. If the houses were contiguous and of equal height,

27 What I tell you in darkness, *that* speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, *that* preach ye upon the housetops.

28 <sup>p</sup> And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to

p Is. 8: 12, 13; Lu. 12: 4; 1 Pe. 3: 14.

the occupants could pass along the roof from one to another. Thus groups would often be gathered on the roof in social enjoyment. Whatever was there said would receive publicity, although sometimes the place was used for private interviews.

28. In v. 26, they are told not to fear the opprobrium, under which they would lie in the estimation of men, for their integrity in due time would be universally acknowledged. Here they are directed not to fear for their lives, inasmuch as the body alone was subject to the malice of their enemies. The soul, the immortal part of their being, was beyond the reach of persecution. This was what sustained the martyrs in their fiery trials. Their body was in the power of their enemies. They could torture, burn, or crucify it. They could give it to be torn and devoured by wild beasts. But the soul, tranquil and serene, in the full exercise of its immortal powers, was in the hands of God, to be received by him, through this passage-way of suffering, into a state of glory and blessedness. *Fear not them*; literally, *be put not in fear from them*, i. e. be not afraid of them. *To kill the soul*, i. e. bring upon it eternal death, the doom which God only can inflict, as appears from following context. *Fear him* (i. e. God), not as before, *fear from him*, because reverence and awe, such as is due from man to his Maker, is intended, and not the fear or terror which human cruelty can inspire. This change of expression is sufficient of itself to confute the opinion of Stier, that the object of fear in this latter clause, is Satan, the enemy of souls, who, not content with the destruction of the body through his persecuting agents, seeks also to destroy the soul. Besides Satan is

kill the soul : but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

never represented as having power to destroy the soul, in the sense here intended. The context also shows that God, their Almighty Protector, who can save them from the malice of their enemies, or cast them off, if faithless and disobedient, from his presence into hell, is evidently the Being held up here, as the object of their reverence and awe. See also James 4 : 12. *To destroy both soul and body in hell.* Eternal destruction is here evidently intended. It is not annihilation, for the destruction spoken of takes place in *Gehenna*. Nor would a stroke of annihilation be so much dreaded by men, as the prolonged tortures of the body. Two things are here clearly implied. One, that the soul and body will be united hereafter, and the other, that the *gehenna* spoken of, must be in the invisible world, since into the temporal *gehenna*, or vale of Hinnom, the body only could be thrown.

29. *Are not two sparrows, &c.* In this simile of their superiority over sparrows, for which God exercises such watchful care, they are still further encouraged to rely upon divine protection. *Sparrows.* Any small birds. *Sold for a farthing.* The word here translated *farthing*, was a Roman coin of the value of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cent. This shows how valueless were these little birds. The farthing in Matt. 5 : 26, was a different coin. *And one of them shall not fall*; more accurately, *and yet not even one of them shall fall on the ground*, i. e. fall dead or perish through cold or starvation. *Without your Father*, i. e. without God's providential arrangement ("without the knowledge and consent of your Father." Kypke). This is one of the most direct and

30 <sup>r</sup> But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

32 <sup>r</sup> Whosoever therefore shall

q 1 Sa. 14 : 45; 2 Sa. 14 : 11; Lu. 21 : 18; Ac. 27 : 34. <sup>r</sup> Lu. 12 : 8; Ro. 10 : 9, 10.

striking proofs of God's superintending providence, to be found in the Bible His omniscient eye rests upon the little bird in its free and happy flight, provides for its wants, shapes its course, and brings it safely to the appointed end of its brief life, with as much watchful care, as is bestowed upon the most important animal existences on earth.

30. *But* (not only is the little sparrow thus watched over) *the very hairs of your head even are all numbered.* Why should you then fear for the more important parts of the body, and especially for the soul which is of incomparably more value than the animal world. Such is the train of thought of this beautiful passage. What a view is here given of the minute, as well as general care, exercised by God over his creatures. See also 1 Sam. 14 : 45; Luke 21 : 18; Acts 27 : 34.

31. *Fear ye not therefore.* This is an emphatic repetition, in view of the illustration just given, of the sentiment of vs. 26-28. *Of more value than* (literally, *differ from*, the comparison as to value being implied,) *many sparrows*, and by implication, of greater worth, in the sight of God, than all the brute creation, or even the material universe.

32. This verse contains a still further ground of encouragement, and is of wider and more general application. What precedes was based on God's providential care over his creatures. Now the disciples are promised their Lord's approval and protection, as his professed followers. *Shall confess me before men* (literally, *shall confess in behalf of me*), i. e. shall publicly profess and acknowledge me. A practical



confess me before men, 'him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

33 'But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

8 Re. 3 : 5. t Ma. 8 : 38; Lu. 9 : 26; 2 Ti. 2 : 12.

and sincere profession, as well as denial in the next verse, is intended. "The Lord will not confess the confessing Judas, nor deny the denying Peter; the traitor who denied him in act is denied; the apostle who confessed him unto death will be confessed." Alford. *Before men* is opposed to the words, *before my Father* in the next clause, which refers to the approval of their conduct at the day of judgment, and their participation in the bliss of heaven in the presence of God. *Will confess* in this latter clause has the sense of, *will acknowledge, recognize with tokens of honor.*

33. *Shall deny* is antithetic to the profession spoken of in the preceding verse, and means to reject or deny the claims of Jesus to the Messiahship, and in general, to refuse obedience to the requisitions of his gospel. We are taught in these verses, that an open and sincere profession of love to Christ, is a duty binding upon all, and one to which a special blessing is attached; while the opposite course is sinful, and followed by rejection and banishment from God's presence. This does not imply that none can be saved, except such as make a public profession of religion and join the visible church. It refers rather to the state of the heart, in sympathy with Christ, and ready on all suitable occasions to acknowledge its love for him, or manifesting the opposite temper and spirit.

34. Our Lord here disabuses his disciples of the idea of immediate peace, harmony, and prosperity, which they thought would attend the setting up of the Messiah's kingdom. *Think not.* Do not suppose. *That I am come as the Messiah.* *To send* (i. e. introduce,

34 "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-

u Lu. 12 : 49, 51, 52, 53. w Mi. 7 : 6.

establish) *peace on earth.* This refers in general to the whole world, but has particular reference to Palestine, which the Jews supposed would enjoy peace and prosperity under the Messiah's reign, but which was torn with internal dissensions and family variances, through conflicting views respecting Christ, to a greater degree than any other country. Instead of acknowledging him as the Messiah, as a people they rejected him, and thus hastened their destruction by the Roman people, aptly represented here by the *sword.* To cause these civil commotions and wars, was not the direct object or purpose for which Christ came. The gospel promotes peace, harmony, happiness. It recognizes and secures the rights of all. But the sinful passions of men are arrayed against it. Persecutions, bloodshed, and wars ensue, and thus a result is brought about, for which Christianity is not at all responsible. It is one of the most groundless, as well as malicious charges, which infidelity advances against the religion of Christ, that it has caused almost all the wars and disorders, which have ravaged and disturbed Christendom since its promulgation. It is to the wickedness of men that these evils are to be charged, and not to the Gospel. When its principles are universally disseminated and observed, men will beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Wars will cease, and the angelic prediction, "on earth peace," will be fully verified.

35, 36. In v. 21, the persecuting spirit, with which members of the same family should rise up against one another, is foretold. The cause of this family bitterness and hostility, is here

law against her mother-in-law.

36 And <sup>a</sup> a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household.

37 <sup>b</sup> He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.

<sup>y</sup> Ps. 41 : 9, & 55 : 13; Mi. 7 : 6; Jno. 13 : 18.  
<sup>z</sup> Lu. 14 : 26.

declared to be the mission of Christ. *To set at variance*; literally, *to divide into two parts, to disunite*. It implies here both positive and active hostility. *The daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law*. It is assumed that there was no previous variance between these parties. Hence the disuniting effects of the gospel, in the conversion of one or the other of them to Christianity, is more emphatically seen, in severing even those, between whom this relation, so proverbially attended with family jars, had failed thus far to produce discord. This state of things was predicted in Micah 7 : 6. *A man's foes, &c.* Such will be the bitter and relentless hatred of his family, on his conversion to Christ, that compared with it, he might be said to have elsewhere no enemies at all. *A man's*; literally, *the man's*, generically spoken. See N. on v. 16.

37. See Deut. 33 : 9; Ex. 32 : 26-29, to which passages this verse is thought to have reference. In these family discords, should any one be tempted to abjure his faith, and thus show that he loved his friends and relatives more than his Savior, he would be unworthy of him. He could have no claim to be numbered among his friends, or to partake of the blessings of his kingdom. Steir well remarks on the great reward, which underlies the expression *worthy of me*, counterbalancing any seeming asperity in these words of Christ.

38. *Taketh not his cross*. It was customary among the Romans, to compel a person to bear his own cross to the place of punishment. In the nature of the case, this must have been an oppressive burden. Many sank under it.

38 <sup>a</sup> And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

39 <sup>b</sup> He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it.

40 ¶ <sup>c</sup> He that receiveth you,

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 16 : 24; Ma. 8 : 34; Lu. 9 : 23, & 14 : 27.  
<sup>b</sup> Ch. 16 : 25; Lu. 17 : 23; Jno. 12 : 25.  
<sup>c</sup> Ch. 13 : 5; Lu. 9 : 48, & 10 : 16; Jno. 12 : 44, & 13 : 20; Ga. 4 : 44.

Our Savior, weakened by previous suffering, was unable to bear his cross the whole distance, and it was laid upon another (27 : 32). *To take up the cross* became in this way a proverbial expression, denoting the performance of a very painful duty. The abjuration of one's family by remaining faithful to Christ, was one of the most formidable crosses which the early Christians had to bear. Tears, entreaties, threats, banishment from the domestic circle, persecutions even unto death, were the almost invariable results of embracing Christ. I cannot think with Alford, that our Lord intended that this should be understood of his own death and cross, although it is doubtless implied, especially in the next clause, *followeth after me*, the usual signification of which, however, is *to follow as one's disciple*.

39. *He that findeth his life*, i. e. he that saveth his life by renouncing Christ. *Shall lose it*, i. e. eternal felicity, often designated as *life* in its highest sense. *He that loseth his life* through adhesion to his Savior. This appears from the following expression, *for my sake*, which is added to prevent the false notion, that the loss of one's life has in itself any merit, or necessarily secures any of the blessings promised to such as suffer for the cause of Christ. See N. on Matt. 5 : 10. It also supplies the idea of *desire*, which is wanting in the word *loseth* as opposed to *findeth*, for no one, in itself considered, can wish to lose his life; yet this is so, when done for the sake of Jesus Christ. If as Olshausen and Alford think, the expression also has a

receiveth me : and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.

41 <sup>d</sup> He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward :

*a* 1 Ki. 17 : 10, & 18 : 4 ; 2 Ki. 4 : 8.

deeper signification, *dying unto sin, crucifying the lusts of the body*, then it may be literally true, that no one can be more desirous to save his natural life, than the Christian to destroy this body of sin, from which he is anxious to be delivered (Rom. 7 : 24). *Shall find it* in the bliss and enjoyment of heaven.

40. *He that receiveth you*, as guests, teachers, friends. An external, formal reception is not here referred to, but such a warm and hearty welcome, as is given to friends of kindred feeling and sympathy. Our Lord here recurs again to his disciples whom he was about to send forth. *Receiveth me*. They were Christ's ambassadors, and he was honored, or the contrary, in the treatment which they received. In like manner as Christ was sent of the Father, who ever received him, (as every one would, who received in heart the message of his apostles,) received him by whom he was sent. So intimate a relationship between Christ and his ministers, invests their office with great dignity, and renders the reception of their message a matter of the most momentous interest.

41. *A prophet*. This term is here applied, in general, to divinely appointed teachers under the Christian dispensation. The word is sometimes used in a special sense, of those endowed with the prophetic gift, and who were next in rank to the apostles. See 1 Cor. 12 : 28 ; Eph. 4 : 11. *In the name of a prophet*, i. e. in his character as a prophet, and because he is one. It is remarkable how our Savior turns away the mind from the mere act, and fastens it upon the motive. *Shall receive* in the day of final account. *A prophet's reward*, i. e. a similar reward to that, which the prophet himself shall receive

and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward.

42 <sup>e</sup> And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little

*e* Ch. 8 : 5, 6, & 25 : 40 ; Ma. 9 : 41 ; He. 6 : 10.

from Him whose commission he bears. There are great lessons of instruction and encouragement to be drawn from this passage. If the reception, in a spirit of Christian kindness and hospitality, of one of Christ's ministers, entitled him who practised it to a share in the reward of the person thus received, how can we help inferring a like participancy in blessing, of those who in these days assist in training up and sending forth ministers of the gospel to the destitute in our own and in foreign lands. The patrons of our education and missionary societies are virtually preaching the gospel by those, whom they have put into the field of labor, and are there sustaining by their prayers and benefactions. So also with those who sustain the other benevolent organizations of the churches. None shall lose their reward. *A righteous man*. This seems to refer not to a professed teacher, as does the word *prophet*, but to a private Christian. Kindness and sympathy bestowed upon them, was not to be without their reward. Christ overlooks not the humblest of his followers. They are all the objects of his unceasing regard. He who receives them into his love and confidence, sympathizes in their trials and sorrows, assists them by his counsels, and when necessary, by his contributions, will receive from his Savior abundant reward both here and hereafter.

42. *One of these little ones*. This is not to be referred to little children, or young persons, or those especially in humble station, as it is by some erroneously interpreted, but to his disciples, who were yet learners, and therefore of humble attainments as well as station in life. *A cup of cold water only*. In the hot countries of the East, water was sometimes carried about the streets of

ones, a cup of cold *water* only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

cities, and offered to persons, from whom some trifling reward was customarily received. The expression here denotes the smallest act of kindness. *In the name of a disciple*, i. e. because he is a disciple. This shows that the "little ones" here referred to were disciples. *Lose his reward*; literally, *the reward*, i. e. the reward due to such an act of courtesy and kindness.

The review of this chapter, as it has been thus explained, furnishes much instruction and encouragement in the midst of trials and opposition. Ours is the same Savior, who sent these disciples forth with such tender solicitude for their welfare. The protection he promised them, and the rewards with which he cheered them on, are ours to possess, for he has promised (28 : 20) to be with his ministers and people always even to the end of the world. A life of zeal and activity, an unshaken reliance upon God's providential care, a firm, bold, and uncompromising spirit in preaching truth and opposing error, a forsaking of all for Christ, and a readiness to sacrifice the dearest ties of life, if found to interfere with the claims of the Redeemer, are all made incumbent upon a faithful profession of his name, and connected with the highest rewards in the eternal world. Nor shall the slightest acts of benevolence, if performed in the spirit of the gospel, be overlooked by Him, who has promised to acknowledge and reward the mere giving of a cup of cold water to one of his disciples.

#### CHAPTER XI.

1. *Made an end of commanding*, i. e. finished giving them instructions. *He departed thence*, &c. He did not cease from his own labors, while the apostles were absent. *In their cities*. The cities of the Galileans, in whose region he was now laboring.

2-19. JOHN THE BAPTIST SENDS DIS-  
VOL. I.—6

#### CHAPTER XI.

AND it came to pass when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he

CIPLES TO JESUS. *Capernaum*. Luke 7 : 18-35. This narrative, placed by Matthew after the sending forth of the Twelve, should have followed the healing of the centurion's servant (8 : 5-13). It is here evidently out of its order, for Herod beheaded John, while the Twelve were absent (see Mark 6 : 30 ; Matt. 14 : 13). It is probable that Jesus was at or near Capernaum, when he received this message of inquiry from John.

2. *Had heard* from his own disciples. See Luke 7 : 18. *In the prison*. His place of confinement, according to Josephus, was the castle of Machærus, at the southern extremity of Perea, east of the Dead Sea. Howe (*Orient. Scenes*, p. 223) thinks that this feast was celebrated in the midst of Galilee, either at Sepphoris, a little north-west of Nazareth, or at Tiberias, Herod's new and favorite city. But the distance of the place of this event from the theatre of Jesus' labors, referred to in N. on 14 : 13, would seem to indicate Machærus or some such remote place. While confined there, either from doubts arising in his own mind (which is Olshausen's view), or what is more likely, to confirm by a personal acquaintance with Jesus, the faith of his disciples, wavering amidst the circumstances of trial, in which they were placed by the imprisonment of their master, he sends two of them with the direct inquiry as to the Messiahship of our Lord. Alford rejects both these reasons for the inquiry, the one or the other of which all interpreters, from the time of Chrysostom have adopted, and which the terms of the inquiry on its very face demands, and makes it result simply from a desire, on the part of John, to obtain from the lips of our Lord a distinct and public declaration of his Messiahship, which would set at rest all doubt in the minds of those, who were distracted by the conflicting ru-



departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

2 <sup>a</sup> Now when John had heard <sup>b</sup> in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

3 And said unto him, Art thou <sup>c</sup> he that should come, or do we look for another ?

<sup>a</sup> Lu. 7 : 13, 19, &c.    <sup>b</sup> Ch. 14 : 3.  
<sup>c</sup> Ge. 49 : 10 ; Nu. 24 : 17 ; Da. 9 : 24 ; Jno. 6 : 14.

mors of his character and wonderful works. This opinion is entitled to much consideration, although the form of the question, especially the second clause of it, hardly admits of its adoption. Olshausen inclines to the opinion that the message, besides its indication of John's wavering faith, also contained a call upon Jesus, to hasten the carrying out of his plans. But the answer of our Lord in vs. 4-6, does not look to such a point in the question, and besides, we can hardly suppose that John would venture on such a procedure with a person, whom he had acknowledged so much his superior (see 3 : 14 ; John 1 : 29-34.) *The works*, i. e. miracles, as appears from vs. 3-5.

3. *Art thou he that should come*, i. e. the Messiah. One of the designations of the Messiah was *the coming One*. See John 6 : 14 ; 11 : 27 ; Luke 17 : 20. Compare also with this, Rev. 1 : 4, 8. *Or do we look for another ?* Must we look for some one else as this personage ? Art thou the true Messiah, or are we yet to wait for his appearance ? Some by translating the clause, *thou art he that should come, and do we look for another*, think that John had reference to the notion, which the modern Jews assert was entertained by the Jews of an early period, that there were to be two Messiahs, the one suffering, the other triumphant. But not to say that this translation is inadmissible, there is no proof whatever, that the Jews of that time indulged in so absurd an expectation. There might have been some doubt and perplexity in reconciling the prophecies, where he is referred to, as in a state of extreme

4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see :

5 <sup>d</sup> The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and <sup>e</sup> the

<sup>d</sup> Is. 29 : 18, & 35 : 4, 5, 6, & 42 : 7 ; Jno. 2 : 23, & 3 : 2, & 5 : 36, & 10 : 25, 38, & 14 : 11.  
<sup>e</sup> Ps 22 : 26 ; Is. 61 : 1 ; Lu. 4 : 18 ; Ja. 2 : 5.

humiliation, and yet, as a conqueror, subjugating all his enemies and occupying the throne of his father David. But none attempted to remove the difficulty, by supposing that two Messiahs were to appear, as claimed by the modern Jews.

4. Our Savior did not give a direct reply to this inquiry of John, but pointed to his works, which answered fully to the predictions of the Old Testament, respecting the office and works of the Messiah. If John's message was intended to confirm his disciples, they would thus be made themselves to furnish an answer to his question. They would report on their return, that they found him performing miracles, and imparting instruction to men of all classes, and especially the poor, in a way answering exactly to the prophecy in Isa. 61 : 1 ; 35 : 5, 6. Thus their doubts, if they had any, would be removed more fully, than though Jesus had met them with a direct avowal of his Messiahship.

5. *The blind receive*, &c. We are not to suppose that all these miraculous cures took place at this time in the presence of John's disciples. Luke (7 : 21) says that in "that same hour he cured," &c. He, doubtless, performed some of these miracles in their presence. But the whole country rang with the report of his deeds, and there was no room for ignorance or doubt of his mighty power. The raising of the dead, which Alford takes also in a spiritual sense, as betokening the blessings and miracles of divine grace upon the souls of men, may refer to the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7 : 11-

poor have the gospel preached to them.

6 And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not *f* be offended in me.

7 <sup>g</sup> And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the mul-

*f* Is. 8 : 14, 15 ; ch. 13 : 57, & 24 : 10, & 26 : 31 ; Ro. 9 : 32, 33 ; 1 Co. 1 : 23, & 2 : 14 ; Ga. 5 : 11 ; 1 Pe. 2 : 8. *g* Lu. 7 : 24.

18), the narrative of whose restoration to life immediately precedes this message of John, if not to the ruler's daughter (9 : 25). *The poor have the gospel preached to them* ; literally, *glad tidings are preached to the poor*. This was not miraculous, but yet furnished evidence of his Messiahship, because his doctrines were of such a nature as to be referable to God only as their author, and were preached in accordance with the Messianic prophecy. By *poor* is meant here the humble classes of society. Tholuck thinks that there is a twofold reference to external and internal poverty. In preaching to those of low estate, Christ showed himself unlike the teachers of Judaism, or the heathen philosophers, who courted the rich and despised the poor. This feature in his ministry, so strange that it is here joined with the most stupendous miracles, corresponded exactly to the prediction in Isa. 61 : 1. What a heavenly portraiture ! Such has been the peculiar feature of Christianity, ever since the time of its founder. The poor have been the principal recipients of its blessings. To them it offers consolation in trial, heavenly riches in place of poverty, rest from the toils and hardships of life. It adapts itself to their lowly condition, and transforms many a hut and cottage into a temple of praise, more truly glorious, than the most gorgeous and magnificent cathedral ever constructed.

6. This verse contains a gentle rebuke of the want of faith, either on the part of John or his disciples, which prompted the message to Jesus. *Shall not be offended in me*. The word translated *to offend*, literally signifies, *to cause to stumble*, as when one purposely

titudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see ? <sup>h</sup> A reed shaken with the wind ?

8 But what went ye out for to see ? A man clothed in soft rai-

*h* Ep. 4 : 14.

puts in the way of another *stumbling-block*. The humble circumstances in which Jesus appeared and claimed the Messiahship, so contrary to the expectation of the Jews, is spoken of as a stumbling-block, and the passage may be paraphrased: Blessed is he who does not place my humble condition, as a stumbling-block in the way of his belief in my Messiahship.

7. Jesus now takes occasion to speak more fully of John's character before the people, who might have misapprehended it, from the question he had just proposed, and this he introduces by several inquiries, as to the cause of their flocking to him as they had done. The question proposed by John, although intended, as we have said, to remove the doubts of his disciples, may have left an unfavorable impression on the multitude, in whose hearing it was put. Not apprehending the scope of the inquiry, they may have been led to think that John, whom Jesus claimed as his prophetic forerunner, had already begun to question his Messiahship, and had been rebuked therefor in the reply of Christ. To remove this erroneous impression, our Lord, after the departure of John's disciples, addresses the people with the inquiry, "What went ye out into the wilderness to see?" adding the words, "a reed shaken by the wind?" i. e. a man of changeable and fickle temperament, and as inconstant as a reed shaken with the wind. This was not John's character. They were not to suppose from John's question, that he had doubted for a moment the truth of the testimony, which he had himself borne to Jesus on the banks of Jordan (John 1 : 29-34). In this sense the words, *reed shaken by the*

ment? Behold, they that wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses.

9 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, 'and more than a prophet.

10 For this is *he* of whom it is

† Ch. 14 : 5 ; & 21 : 26 ; Lu. 1 : 76 , & 7 : 26 .

*wind*, are apposite, and must remove all doubt as to the firmness of John's belief in the Messiahship of Jesus. *A reed*. This hollow and jointed plant grew on low and wet soils, such as the portions overflowed annually by the Jordan, which, as being the scene of John's ministry, rendered our Lord's allusion to it very suitable. Being light and yielding it was easily agitated by the winds, and hence was an apt emblem of a fickle and inconstant man.

8. *But what went ye*, &c. The adversative conjunction here implies a denial of what was assumed in the previous question. As Bloomfield remarks, it gives the sense: If ye deny that ye went with that view, for what purpose did ye go? *A man clothed in soft raiment?* i. e. an effeminate person clad in elegant and costly array. *Behold they that wear*, &c. Such persons are not found making their home in the desert, and subsisting on the scanty sustenance obtained in those solitary wilds. The garb of John was the very opposite, and his habits were plain and abstemious. He was every way fitted for the stern duties of a reformer, and to be the forerunner of a suffering and persecuted Messiah. *Soft raiment*, i. e. of fine texture and costly material.

9. *A prophet*. A rising gradation, first a *reed*, then a *man*, and here a *prophet*, the great Forerunner of the Messiah predicted in the Old Testament, greater than any of the prophets who had gone before. The character of John was so exalted, and his preaching so effective, that many flocked to him with the vague impression that he might be the Christ, or at least one of the old and celebrated prophets, reappearing on the earth (see 21 : 26 ; Luke 3 : 15 ; John 1 : 19-23). *Yea, I*

written, \* Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater

‡ Mal. 3 : 1 ; Ma. 1 : 2 ; Lu. 1 : 76 , & 7 : 27 .

*say unto you*, &c. Christ does not deny to John this character, as he did that, denoted by the shaking reed and the soft raiment. He even goes farther and declares that he was *more than a prophet*, i. e. of more clear and exalted views, and intrusted with a higher commission than any of the prophets.

10. *For this is he*, &c. This is given as a reason for John's superiority over the ancient prophets. He was the one foretold by Malachi (3 : 1), as the messenger to be sent before the face of the Messiah, to prepare the Jewish nation for his reception. How honorable the post, and what a strong living faith must the messenger have had in the Messianic character of Him whom he foretold as about to appear. The quotation from Malachi embraces the sense, but not the exact words of the original. *Before thy face*, in the original prophecy is *before me*. Its change to the second person by our Lord, shows that what was originally said by Jehovah of himself, may with propriety, when necessary, be said of the Messiah, which, as Alford remarks, is no mean indication of his own eternal and coequal Godhead. *Which shall prepare*, &c. See N. on 3 : 3 ; Mark 1 : 2.

11. This verse is confirmatory of the latter clause in v. 9. *Among them that are born of women*, i. e. of all the prophets and saints, who have hitherto lived. This is an advance on the praise bestowed upon John in v. 9. The design is to make more striking the contrast, between him, and "the least in the kingdom of heaven," with which the verse closes. *A greater* (prophet, see Luke 7 : 28), i. e. more distinguished as being the forerunner of Christ. *He that is least*; literally, *the lesser*, put generically for those of inferior

than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

rank and attainments in the kingdom of heaven. The sense of this passage seems to be this. Although John, as the forerunner of Christ, and in his high privilege of living in the days of the Messiah, and administering to him the rite of baptism, was superior to any of the ancient prophets, yet under the gospel dispensation, the least of Christ's ministers, enlightened by the Holy Spirit to see more clearly the plan of redemption and the mysteries of the cross, was greater than even this eminent prophet. This yields a good sense of this somewhat difficult passage, and answers well to its general scope, which is the comparison of John, on the one hand, with the ancient prophets; and on the other, with the religious teachers of the new dispensation, by which both received distinguished praise, John, by being preferred to all before him, Christ's ministers, by being preferred to him. It is worthy of note, that the great majority of interpreters before the time of Calvin, including Luther, Melancthon, and the principal reformers, referred the expression *the least*, to the Messiah in his state of humiliation. As it respects the phrase *kingdom of heaven*, it is not here to be referred to the beatified state of the blessed above, for Christ is not drawing a comparison between John and the saints in heaven. Nor should we so unduly press the terms of this comparison, as to make it include among the persons here referred to, the most obscure and ignorant saints of the Christian dispensation. The comparison is between John as a public teacher of religion, and the apostles and disciples who should preach the gospel of the new dispensation. All such passages as this should be interpreted with due regard to their obvious scope.

12. This verse has received a variety of interpretations, of which two only

12 <sup>1</sup> And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

l Lu. 16 : 16.

will be here noticed. One is that which refers it to the great exertions, which must be made to secure a personal interest in Christ, and effect the salvation of the soul. But this interpretation overlooks the demands of the context, and conforms so little to the parallel passage in Luke 16 : 16, that no sound interpreter can adopt it. The other interpretation refers it to the eagerness, amounting to a *rush*, with which men flocked to hear the message of John, and afterwards the gospel from Jesus himself. This agrees with Luke in the passage above referred to, "the law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it," i. e. every one presseth forward with eagerness to hear the gospel message, in its first preparatory annunciation by John, and afterwards in its more full and open proclamation by Jesus. The words, *until now*, by no means imply, that the time of this eagerness to participate in the blessings of the kingdom of heaven, was then brought to a close. It continued through the whole ministry of our Lord; it was a feature of the apostolic age; and to a greater or less extent, has marked the proclamation of the gospel in every age and country to the present time, and will continue to be the case, until the whole earth shall be full of the glory of the Lord. *The violent*, i. e. those who thus eagerly press into the kingdom. *Take it by force*; literally, *seize and take it*, as when men seize and drag away the plunder of a sacked city. A strong expression of the eager joy with which men, in the times here spoken of, thronged to hear from John and Christ the words of salvation. The passage, thus interpreted becomes illustrative and confirmatory of v. 11, by showing the superiority of John over all who preceded him, not only in dignity of office, but in the



13 <sup>m</sup> For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

14 And if ye will receive *it*,

*m* Mal. 4 : 6. *n* Mal. 4 : 5 ; ch. 17 : 12 ; Lu. 1 : 17.

great power and success of his ministrations. It was an honorable testimony to the worth of this tried servant, who had now been imprisoned for a number of months by Herod, and who was soon to suffer death at his hands.

13. *For all the prophets, &c.* This also is a further illustration of v. 11, the dignity of John being yet the theme of the discourse. The verse may be paraphrased : for all the Old Testament prophets and other writers and expounders of the law, prophesied of times to them afar off, but in which John lived and was a principal actor. They spoke of a distant dispensation, which John had the honor to introduce, and was therefore in the dignity of his office their superior. The words, *until John*, are not therefore to be interpreted in the sense, that the prophetic period continued until the time of John, of which it was inclusive, but that, as Olshausen well remarks, "with John the prophecies were fulfilled." The *law* is here put figuratively for the writers of the law, which embraced all that portion of the Old Testament not included in the prophetic writings.

14. This verse contains additional evidence of John's dignity and superiority to those before him. *If ye will receive it*, i. e. confide in my testimony respecting John, and receive as true the declaration I am about to make. *This is Elias, &c.* Through a misinterpretation of Mal. 4 : 5, the Jews supposed that Elias was to reappear upon the earth. Jesus here rectifies their error by referring this prediction to John, who came in the spirit and power of Elias (Luke 1 : 17). The denial of John (John 1 : 21) had reference to his personal identity with Elias, in the sense expected by the Jews. But in his zeal as a reformer, his abstemious habits, and his boldness and severity of

this is <sup>a</sup> Elias, which was for to come.

15 <sup>o</sup> He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

*o* Ch. 13 : 9 ; Lu. 8 : 8 ; Re. 2 : 7, 11, 17, 29, & 3 : 6, 13, 22.

denunciation against wickedness, he was the antitype of Elias, and a reappearance of the spirit which animated that distinguished prophet. Olshausen thinks that Mal. 4 : 5, had its partial fulfillment at least in the Transfiguration, and that the prophecy is not yet wholly fulfilled. So Alford : "the great and complete fulfillment is yet future—at the great day of the Lord." The error of both these expositors results from a wrong interpretation of the expression in Malachi, "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." The gospel dispensation, although one of love and mercy to the penitent and believing, yet to the enemies of truth, is always represented in the Scriptures, as most terrible in its results. Compare the prophecy of Joel 2 : 31, which Peter (Acts 2 : 16) declares to have begun to find its fulfillment on the day of Pentecost. *Which was for to come* as predicted by Malachi.

15. In the preceding verse, our Lord demands the faith of his hearers, in respect to the fulfillment in John of the prophecy, that Elias was to reappear on earth. This was a great truth involving great consequences. If John was the person to whom the law and the prophets pointed as the forerunner of the Messiah, then Jesus was evidently that personage, and was to be received and obeyed as such. To this implied inference he summons their attention in the words of this verse, often used by him after the utterance of parables and important truths. See 13 : 9, 43 ; Mark 4 : 9, 23 ; 7 : 16 ; Luke 8 : 8 ; 14 : 35 ; Luke 8 : 8 ; 14 : 35 ; Rev. 2 : 7, 11, 17, 29 ; 3 : 6, 13, &c. *Hath ears to hear*, i. e. the natural power to hear. *Let him hear* with attention and desire to understand.

16-19. The transition from the high official dignity of John, to the captious,

16 ¶ <sup>p</sup> But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,

17 And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced;

*p* Lu. 7 : 31.

fault-finding spirit, with which both he and Jesus had been received, was very natural, and our Lord illustrates it by a reference to the amusements of children, in which some, through ill humor, are pleased with no play which can be suggested by their young companions. Under this most appropriate simile, he administered a sharp rebuke to the perverse and cavilling spirit of the persons referred to.

16. *Whereunto shall I liken, &c.* This question serves to call attention to the comparison about to be made, and was a form of introduction often used in such connections. See Mark 4 : 30 (where the condescending plural, as Alford calls it, is used); Luke 13 : 18, 20. *This generation.* In Luke, "the men of this generation." *Unto children, &c.* In ancient times the markets were places of resort, not only for men to transact public and private business, but for children to engage in their sports. They are here said to be *sitting*, either in reference to their resting from their amusements, or more probably, as a mode of expression, conforming to the usual posture of persons in the market, without implying that the children were absolutely sitting, at the time of their vain attempts to start a play. *Calling unto their fellows*, i. e. addressing their companions. The verb is used generally in the sense of *calling by name*, as when one is kindly and familiarly addressed. It has generally been supposed that the speaking children represented Jesus and John, and the silent children, the capricious, fault-finding Jews. But Olshausen refers both classes of these ill-humored children, whom it was impossible to please in any way, to the capricious contemporaries of Jesus. But as Prof. Ken-

we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say,

drick well remarks, he seems to have overlooked the exact point of the comparison, which is not the disagreement of the children among themselves, but the impossibility to suit a portion of them.

17. *We have piped, &c.* We have engaged in joyous sports; we have piped for you, as is done at weddings and other festivities, and yet you have not joined us in our play, but remain sullen and dissatisfied. *We have mourned, &c.* This refers to a play, in which children went through the forms of mourning, as at a funeral. This failed also to interest these wayward children. Two opposite kinds of play were proposed, but they were pleased with neither.

18. *For John came, &c.* This and the following verse belong to v. 16, showing the ground of the likeness, there asserted between the men of that generation and the children in the market. *Neither eating nor drinking.* Luke says, "neither eating bread nor drinking wine." The idea is that John did not indulge in the common luxuries of the table. He ate no bread and drank no wine. He lived according to the strictest regimen of the Nazarenes (see 3 : 4). *They* (i. e. the Pharisees) *say he hath a devil.* So abstemious were his habits, and so secluded was he from the society of his fellow men, that his enemies charged him with being possessed with a gloomy demon, which drove him off into the wilderness. According to the demonology of the Jews, wicked and unclean spirits were wandering about in dry and desert places (see 12 : 43), restless and wretched, and John's retirement to the desert seemed to indicate that he was under demoniacal influence.

19. *The Son of man.* See N. on 8 :

Behold, a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans

q Ch. 9:10.

20. *Came eating and drinking*, i. e. living like other men and practising no austerities. This sense is clear, from the antithesis with "not eating and drinking," in the preceding verse. Reference may also be had to his occasional attendance upon feasts, as the marriage at Cana, Levi's entertainment, &c. *They*, i. e. the same persons who had charged John with being a demoniac. *Behold a man*, &c. This charge was false and malicious. The very habits of life, which they had found fault with John for not practising, they charge as a crime upon our Savior. They even went so far as to accuse him of gluttony and fondness for wine, a wine-bibber, one who indulges freely in wine. As wine was a common beverage in that land of vineyards, in its unfermented state, our Lord most likely drank it. But that he did so in its intoxicating forms, or that he indulged to excess in its use in any form, was a false and malicious libel upon his character. But the Pharisees were ready to find fault with any one, who refused them the homage and respect, which they claimed in virtue of their superior piety and attainments. It was enough that John had addressed them as a generation of vipers. From that time they speak of him as one possessed of a demon. Had no other cause of enmity existed, in reference to Jesus, his Sermon on the Mount was sufficient to have aroused their opposition and hatred. They endeavored to break down or weaken his influence, by charging him with gluttony and wine-bibbing. *A friend of publicans and sinners*. Words uttered with ill intent by them, but how precious in the high and heavenly sense in which they are true. His association with this class of men, was a crime, in their estimation worse even than gluttony or drunkenness. But in the light of the blessed gospel, and in view of his divine mission to save lost sinners, there is no point in his life, where he appears more transcendently

and sinners. ' But wisdom is justified of her children.

20 ¶ ' Then began he to up-

r Lu. 7:35.

s Lu. 10:13, &c.

glorious, than when he thus mingles with outcast men and calls them to repentance. THE SINNER'S FRIEND; this will be the brightest gem in his mediatorial crown. *But* (literally and yet) *wisdom is justified*, &c. This is put in strong contrast with what precedes. The wise and prudent line of conduct pursued by John and Christ, although made the theme of reproach and calumny by the Pharisees, yet will be understood and approved by those who are truly wise, or, as Calvin expresses it (see below), wisdom will maintain her credit and authority with her own children. In respect to the various significations of the word *wisdom*, see N. on 12:42. *Is justified*. The literal rendering, *was justified*, would be better. The circumstances attending the coming of John and Jesus Christ were such, that wisdom was fully justified. The *children of wisdom* is put, according to the Oriental style, for *the wise*, and is here strongly contrasted with the children of folly, whose erroneous views of Jesus and John led them to the captious, fault-finding spirit referred to in the preceding context. As true wisdom consists in the fear of God (see Job 28:28), so her children are those only who are enlightened from above. Such persons, in studying the characters of Christ and his Forerunner, would see how consistent they were with their respective office-work, and how exactly they answered to the Old Testament predictions respecting them. There seems to be, as Calvin well remarks, "a silent antithesis in these words of Christ, between the true and bastard sons of wisdom who display the empty title without having the thing itself. As if Christ had said: Let those who proudly boast themselves to be the sons of wisdom go on in their own insolence. She will notwithstanding maintain her credit and authority with her sons."

20-30. JESUS UPBRAIDS CAPERNAUM AND OTHER CITIES. *Capernaum*.

20. *Then began he*, &c. These words

braided the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not :

21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin !

were doubtless spoken in connection with the preceding, although there may have been a slight pause in the discourse. The perverseness and inconsistency of the Pharisees, which he had just rebuked, especially in vs. 16-19, gave occasion for a more general reproof of those cities, which had enjoyed his ministrations and witnessed the most of his wonderful works. *Because they repented not* (see 4 : 17). There were doubtless many who believed on Jesus, but the people in general remained in a state of impenitence and unbelief.

21. *Woe unto thee, or alas for thee.* An interjectional phrase expressive of grief and indignation. *Chorazin*, a city supposed, on the authority of Jerome, to have been about two miles from Capernaum. *Bethsaida* of Galilee, to distinguish it from another town of the same name, on the N. E. extremity of the lake. The town here referred to was the birth-place of Philip, Andrew, and Peter (John 1 : 45), and lay probably near Capernaum. *Mighty works*; literally, *mighty powers*, i. e. miracles, including all the circumstances attending their performance, by which the divine mission of Christ was established. *Tyre*. This celebrated city, the commercial emporium of Phœnicia, and the mart of nations, was situated on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, about midway between Egypt and Asia Minor. It was founded about 200 years before the time of Solomon, and although it was within the limits, assigned to Asher, yet it was never subject to the Israelites, not even in the times of David and Solomon. Its relations, however, with the Israelites were always of an amicable nature. It grew to such commercial importance, that it was styled, "the merchant city whose merchants were princes, whose traffickers were the honorable of the earth." Isa. 23 : 8. See also Ezek. chaps. 26 and 27. It sustained several sieges, one by Shal-

woe unto thee, Bethsaida ! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have

maneser of five years; another by Nebuchadnezzar of 13 years, by whom it was probably taken, as it came under the sway of the Chaldean monarchs, and afterwards of the Persians. Its most celebrated siege was the one it sustained from Alexander the Great. During the siege, the ancient portion of the city, or the mainland, was destroyed, and its materials employed by the Greeks, to cast up a mound against the portion of the city built upon a narrow rocky island, about a mile in length, and distant a half mile from the old city. The mole thus built by Alexander, by the accumulation of sand, has become an isthmus connecting the island with the mainland. The greater portion of the island is now naked and desolate, "a place to spread nets upon." No predictions were ever more exactly and fully accomplished, than those relating to the downfall of this once great, rich, and powerful city (see Ezek. 26 : 21). The pride, luxury, and vice of this city were great, and although so contiguous to the people, with whom was the worship of the true God, yet its forms of idolatry were never broken up, or even impaired thereby. *Sidon*. This was also a celebrated city of Phœnicia, much older than Tyre, and lying on the sea-coast about 20 miles N. of Tyre. It was probably built by Sidon, the great grandson of Noah (Gen. 10 : 15, 19), and was the most ancient of all the cities of Phœnicia. Under the name of Saida, it is now a town of from 5000 to 7000 inhabitants, principally Mohammedans.

Our Lord affirms in the passage before us, that in the height of their pride and power, if these cities had seen his mighty works, such as had been wrought in Chorazin and Bethsaida, they would have abandoned their idolatrous habits, and like Nineveh at the preaching of Jonah, would have repented in sackcloth and ashes. *Long ago*, i. e. of old,



repented long ago 'in sackcloth and ashes.

22 But I say unto you, "It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

23 And thou, Capernaum, \* which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for

t Jon. 3: 7, 8. u Ch. 10: 15; ver. 24.

formerly. *Sackcloth*. A coarse black cloth, usually made of hair, and worn in times of distress and mourning. In addition to this, *ashes* were sometimes cast upon the head and body, as expressive of grief and humiliation.

22. *It shall be more tolerable, &c.* See N. on 10: 15.

23. *Capernaum* is here more especially reprov'd, for here was our Lord's residence, after his expulsion from Nazareth, and the scene of some of his principal miracles. *Exalted to heaven*. A hyperbolic expression for the highest prosperity, as the antithetic phrase, *brought down to hell*, denotes the depths of adversity. In its enjoyment of the ministry of Christ, it was by far the most favored city in the land, and might almost literally be said to have been raised to heaven in its spiritual privileges. But the Savior was soon to leave it, never personally to revisit it. Soon those mighty works would cease to be wrought within its precincts. It would be left to perish in its unbelief. It would never emerge from the depths of spiritual darkness, into which it had fallen through its rejection of Christ. *Shall be brought down to hell*. The word here rendered *hell*, is not *gehenna*, but *hades*, the invisible or lower world, where dwell, according to the ancient conception, the shades of the dead. It does not here signify the place of future punishment, any more than *heaven* in the preceding clause, means the seat of bliss where God dwells. Both are figuratively used, to denote great spiritual privileges as well as temporal prosperity, and the depths of ruin into

if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

24 But I say unto you, "That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

25 ¶ At that time Jesus an-

∞ See Is. 14: 18; La. 2: 1. y ch. 10: 15.  
z Lu. 10: 21.

which they would fall through the abuse of these privileges. *For if the mighty works, &c.* This is an advance upon the blindness and hardness of heart, attributed to the previously mentioned cities. Had Sodom even, that most wicked of all cities, the cry of whose grievous sin came up to heaven, and brought down God's wrath, enjoyed the presence of Christ and witnessed his mighty works, as did Capernaum, it would have been spared the fiery storm which overwhelmed it, and would have remained to the present time.

24. *It shall be more tolerable, &c.* If the guilt of Capernaum was thus aggravated, how much more dreadful will be the doom of those, who, in these latter days with privileges equal to those enjoyed by Capernaum, have in addition the gift of the Spirit's influences, poured out according to promise, but neglect this so great salvation, and persist in unbelief and impenitence. With the means of grace, the freedom of conscience, and the abundance of religious instruction enjoyed by us, in this age and country, there was no city of Palestine, not even Capernaum, over which so fearful a doom impended, as the one to which unbelief in Christ would expose us. It is worthy of remark, in connection with this denunciation of our Lord, that the site of the three places here mentioned is now unknown.

25. *At that time* (literally, *season*), i. e. about the time when the foregoing discourse took place. There is a close connection of thought, between this passage and the preceding context. The obstinacy and perverseness of the

swered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because "thou hast hid these things

*a* See Ps. 8:2; 1 Co. 1:19, 27, & 2:8; 2 Co. 3:14.

Pharisees and Jewish rulers, in rejecting John's message, and also that of our Savior, had been dwelt upon, and the cities reproved for their blindness and unbelief. From this dark picture of unbelief and ruin, he turns to the humble faith and cheerful obedience with which the poor and lowly had received him, and in view of this exclaims, "I thank thee," &c. Olshausen calls these verses a commentary on the words in v. 19, "wisdom is justified of her children." *Answered and said.* This form of expression is adapted to the train of thought, which ran through the preceding discourse. *Answered* to the manifestation of God's righteous judgments, and his mysterious ways in thus dooming these highly favored but guilty cities. *I thank thee.* The verb literally signifies, *to confess to one*, and expresses our Lord's cheerful assent to the divine plan and purpose, in hiding the truths of the gospel from the wise and prudent, and revealing them unto babes. There is here the additional idea of *returning thanks for benefits*. Our Savior speaks as though a personal favor had been bestowed upon him. He had begun to see of the travail of his soul, and his heart was filled with joy and praise. *O Father.* This refers to the peculiar relation which Christ, as Mediator between God and man, sustained to the first person in the Trinity, and not to any essential relation subsisting between the first and second persons in the Godhead. Jesus, as Messiah, was the Son of God, and hence the correlative term Father, which Christ here and elsewhere employs. In his flesh he was begotten of God, and in his official relation subordinate to Him, by whom he was sent into the world (see N. on 28:19). But while he was begotten in the flesh, in his divine, uncreated nature, he is co-equal with the Father, or as our catechism admirably expresses it, "the same in substance, equal in power and glory." *Lord of heaven and earth,*

from the wise and prudent,<sup>b</sup> and hast revealed them unto babes.

*b* Ch. 16:17

i. e. Supreme Lord and Sovereign of the universe; employed here in striking contrast with *babes* (in other connections, "little ones," "poor in spirit," &c.). Alford remarks that Jesus does not address the Father, as *his* Lord, but as Lord of heaven and earth, he who "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Eph. 1:11. *Because thou hast hid* is to be taken here in the sense, *permitted these things to be hid*. In Scripture language, God is often said to do, what in his wise and sovereign plans he permits to be done. He did not hide the gospel by any direct agency, from these proud and conceited Pharisees. It formed, however, a part of his sovereign plan, that they should reject his Son, and in this their free agency was not in the least infringed upon. *These things* refers to the doctrines and precepts of the gospel, which Christ, the great Revealer, was now making known to men. *Wise and prudent* in their own estimation. If any difference is to be sought in these words, the former may refer to persons of great erudition, the latter, to those possessed of natural talent and shrewdness. With all their learning and discernment, these persons were so blinded, as not to see what was like sunbeams of truth, to those of humble talent and attainment. *Hast revealed them* (literally, *uncovered them*), by imparting a clear spiritual perception of their truth and importance. This agency of God in enlightening men through the truth, is direct, and therefore unlike that by which he is said to hide the truth from the wise and prudent, which is little else than giving them up to their own darkened understanding. *Unto babes.* This stands in contrast with *wise and prudent*, and refers, therefore, to persons of low and humble condition, mere babes in knowledge, compared with those proud, arrogant, and conceited Pharisees.

26. The sovereignty of God in calling

26 Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

27 <sup>c</sup> All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no

<sup>c</sup> Ch. 28 : 18; Lu. 10 : 22; John 3 : 35, & 13 : 3, & 17 : 2; 1 Co. 15 : 27.

some to the knowledge of Christ, and passing others by, is not arbitrary or unjust. He is of infinite benevolence, and will do all things right. In reference to all his ways, which are to us unfathomable and mysterious, we should say, as did our blessed Savior, *Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* Such was thy good pleasure. With the words, *even so*, we may supply from the preceding context, *I thank thee*; or more literally, *yes, I thank thee.* The sovereign pleasure of God is, in this clause, given as a reason for the benevolent arrangement, which called forth the grateful acknowledgments of our Lord.

27. *All things are delivered, &c.* Christ in his divine nature was equal with the Father. But in his mediatorial office, his authority is a delegated one. In his complex person, as God-man, he is always spoken of as inferior to the Father in dignity, power, and knowledge. See Mark 13 : 32; John 8 : 28; 14 : 28; 15 : 10. By keeping this great fact continually in sight, no difficulties will be experienced from any of those texts, which speak of Jesus as having finite attributes. To him as Mediator, have been committed the supreme sway of all things both in heaven and on earth (see 28 : 18), and the disposal of the final destinies of all at the day of judgment (compare John 5 : 22; Acts 10 : 42; 17 : 31). He is thus to reign, until he has put all enemies under his feet (1 Cor. 15 : 25). Then having "delivered up the kingdom (i. e. his Mediatorial authority) to God, even the Father," he shall, so to speak, resume his original Godhead, from which he had emptied himself (Phil. 2 : 6-8), and God will be all in all (1 Cor. 15 : 28), and no longer govern the universe by a mediator or vicegerent. Alford explains the delivering up of all things to

man knoweth the Son, but the Father; <sup>d</sup> neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*.

<sup>d</sup> John 1 : 18, & 6 : 46, & 10 : 15.

the Son, by the preceding *hath revealed*, only this form of speech could not be used of the Eternal Son, himself being the great Revealer of that *delivered* to him by the Father, in order to be revealed. This is true, but does not sound the full depths of this great passage. *No man knoweth the Son but the Father.* This mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son, is based upon, and refers to their co-equal relationship, as persons in the Godhead. In the first clause of this verse, our Lord having asserted his exaltation as God-man, to be the supreme Head of all things, now goes on to declare that between God the Father and himself, in his higher nature, separate from humanity, there exists an equality of knowledge in respect to each other, such as could not be, if either were less than the Omniscient God. In this verse we then find the whole doctrine of the incarnation of one of the Persons in the Trinity. The humble and despised Jesus of Nazareth in union with his human nature, had a divine nature, co-eternal with God the Father, and having all the attributes of the Godhead. To this mysterious and divine Personage, all things have been given by Him, who, in the economy of redemption, has an official superiority designated by the term Father, and who as such sent his Son into the world to achieve this glorious work. *And he to whomsoever, &c.* "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." John 1 : 18. Christ was the great Revealer of the ways of God to man. He could make known the hidden things of God, for he was truly and verily God. No created being could do this. The highest finite intelligence can no more fathom the infinitude of God's perfections, than the lowest. "Who by search-

28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you,

and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

*e* Jn. 13: 15; Phi. 2: 5; 1 Pe. 2: 21; 1 Jn. 2: 6.  
*f* Zec. 9: 9; Phi. 2: 7, 8. *g* Je. 6: 16.

ing can find Him out," or reveal the depths of his infinite mind?

28. *Come unto me*, &c. How inexpressibly sweet and affecting is the transition from the grandeur of the preceding theme, to this tender invitation to poor, weary, heavy-laden sinners to come and find rest in Him, who, in the light of what he had just uttered, was mighty to save all who trusted in him. *That labor and are heavy laden*; literally, *laboring and heavy laden*, the former of which refers to the vain struggles of the soul, while out of Christ, to free itself from sin; the latter to the ponderous load of guilt which is weighing it down. Two more expressive terms to portray sin and its consequences could hardly be found. Some refer the burdens here spoken of to the cumbrous rites and ceremonies, with which the common people were laden by the Scribes and Pharisees. This may be true in part, but the main reference is most unquestionably to the burden of sin, with which all, whether Jews or Gentiles, are bowed down. The *rest*, or *repose*, here spoken of, is a conscience free from the sting of sin, a calm reliance upon Christ for salvation, freedom from the terrors of death, and eternal felicity in the world to come. The word implies a previous condition of toil and fatigue, and places in delightful contrast the struggles and burdened condition of the soul, while under the law of sin and death, and its sweet and peaceful serenity when it is attracted to Jesus.

29. *Take my yoke upon you*. The yoke was the symbol of subjugation. Here it refers to the precepts and service of Christ, which were light and gentle, when compared with the cumbrous ceremonies, under which the Jews were weighed down, and especially the load of sin pressing heavily upon all. *Take my yoke upon you*, was equivalent to saying, *be my*

*disciples*, the same thought being carried out in the next clause, *learn of me*, as the Revealer and Teacher. The invitation is given to all to become learners in the school of Christ, and receive that revelation of the Father spoken of in v. 26. These words are also susceptible of another shade of thought. *My yoke* may be referred to the one, which Christ, as our Redeemer, himself, has borne. As he entered upon a life of suffering, and bore the yoke or burden of our sins with meekness and lowliness of heart, so he exhorts all to come to him with a like spirit of patient endurance, and learn from his example to take upon themselves any burden or duty which, in the providence of God, may be imposed upon them. This sense accords well with the words, *for I am meek and lowly in heart*, which furnish an example of imitation, as well as ground of encouragement for distressed and trembling sinners to come boldly to him for relief. *In heart*. Not only in person, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," but *in heart*, sympathizing with all who are pressed down with the burden of sin. *And ye shall find rest*, &c. This is an emphatic repetition of the last clause of the preceding verse. *Unto your souls*. It was a spiritual rest which was promised, the only one desirable and permanent. "There remaineth a rest for the people of God." Exemption from physical toils is oftentimes a positive curse, and is never to be coveted by a person in the enjoyment of good health. But the rest of the soul, how precious, how desirable. What whirlwinds of sorrow and care at times sweep over the spirit of man. How are the waters agitated and troubled to their lowest depths. To put ourselves under the care of a Being, who can say to these storms and angry waves, *peace, be still*, is a blessing of infinite value.



30 <sup>h</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

#### CHAPTER XII.

AT that time <sup>a</sup> Jesus went on the sabbath day through the

<sup>h</sup> 1 Jn. 5:3.

30. *For my yoke is easy*; literally, *useful, serviceable*. This is added by way of confirmation of the sentiment of the preceding verse. The service of Christ imposes duties upon us. It is a yoke. But it is one that is useful and gentle. The burden is light. Whoever bears it will find it a most delightful symbol of subjection to the Savior, who died for him, and lives as his great Advocate and Intercessor.

#### CHAPTER XII.

1-8. THE DISCIPLES PLUCK THE EARS OF GRAIN ON THE SABBATH. Mark 2: 23-28; Luke 6: 1-5.

1. *And it came to pass*. The incident here related took place, probably, on our Savior's way to Galilee from Jerusalem, which he left in consequence of the persecution of the Jews, because he had healed the infirm man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5: 16, 18). *Went through the corn* (i. e. the fields of corn). Indian maize is not here intended, as that was probably unknown to the Jews. The word *corn* in Scripture usage, is generically put for what we denominate English grains, as wheat, rye, barley, &c. Kernels of these grains may be eat, without any previous preparation. The fact, however, that the disciples ate these raw kernels, and that Jesus justified it on the plea of necessity, when charged with violating the Sabbath, shows that they must have been reduced to extreme hunger. It is from such incidents as this, that we obtain a glimpse of the privations of our blessed Redeemer. True it is not said, that our Savior appeased his hunger in the way here spoken of. But this does not imply that his wants were supplied from other sources, but rather that he was so ab-

corn; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

2 But when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not

<sup>a</sup> De. 23: 25; Ma. 2: 23; Lu. 6: 1.

sorbed in his work of communicating instruction, that he was in a measure insensible to the pangs of hunger. *On the sabbath day* (literally, *sabbath days*, the plural of this word being often used for the singular). Luke calls it "the second sabbath after the first," *the second-first sabbath*, as Dr. Robinson well interprets it. The Jews numbered off seven Sabbaths from the second day of the passover, or of unleavened bread, to the Pentecost. This Sabbath was the first of these seven. This enables us to fix pretty nearly the time, when our Lord passed through these corn-fields. It was just after the celebration of the second passover, which he attended (John 5: 1), and from which, for the reason above given, he returned hastily to Galilee. *To pluck the ears*. This pulling off the heads of grain, includes what Luke expresses by "rubbing them in their hands," so as to separate the grain from the chaff. It was allowed in the law (Deut. 23: 25) to pluck ears of corn, as one passed through a field. Had it been unlawful, the Pharisees would have seized upon that, as a ground of accusation.

2. *But when the Pharisees saw it*. Of their own accord, or employed for this purpose by the rulers, certain persons of this sect appear to have followed Jesus from place to place, to find some ground of accusation against him. Our Lord's visit to Jerusalem (John 5: 1) seems to have stirred up the hostility of the Pharisees, so that from this time they appear never to have lost sight of him, but always to have watched him with an evil eye. *Do that which is not lawful*, &c. As the act of eating was not a violation of the Sabbath, this charge lay in the plucking of the ears of grain, which, by a species of quib-

lawful to do upon the sabbath day.

3 But he said unto them, Have ye not read <sup>b</sup> what David did when he was a hungered, and they that were with him ;

4 How he entered into the

<sup>b</sup> 1 Sa. 21 : 6.    <sup>c</sup> Ex. 25 : 30 ; Le. 24 : 5.

bling, they brought under the head of *reaping*, in the very face of Deut. 23 : 25, where a distinction is made between the two acts.

3. Although our Lord might have answered, that the plucking off and rubbing out of a few heads of grain, to satisfy the cravings of hunger, was a far different thing from reaping and gathering a harvest, yet he chose to reply, by advancing a general principle of great use to his people of every age, in determining the lawfulness of certain acts on the Sabbath. He justifies his disciples on the ground of *necessity*, and thus teaches that all acts of this sort, as well as of *mercy* (see v. 12), are lawful to be performed on the Sabbath. *Have ye not read*, &c. See N. on 19 : 4. Without directly answering their charge, he introduces the example of David (1 Sam. 21 : 1-7), who through necessity ate of the bread appropriated to the use of the priests only (Levit. 24 : 6-9), and thus broke the letter of the ceremonial statutes. The language in 1 Sam. 21 : 6, seems to indicate that hot bread had been put in, on the day that David came, which shows that it was on the Sabbath (Levit. 24 : 8). This, as Alford remarks, makes the example doubly appropriate. *And they (were a hungered) that were with him*. Reference is had to the persons who had fled with him from the court of Saul, for the companies of distressed and discontented persons did not join him, until his escape to the cave of Adullam (1 Sam. 22 : 1, 2).

4. *House of God*, i. e. the Tabernacle. Until the building of the temple, this was the place, where were deposited the sacred utensils and symbols of

house of God, and did eat <sup>c</sup> the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, <sup>d</sup> but only for the priests ?

5 Or have ye not read in the <sup>e</sup> law, how that on the sabbath days

<sup>d</sup> Ex. 29 : 32, 33 ; Le. 8 : 31, & 24 : 9.  
<sup>e</sup> Nu. 28 : 9 ; Ju. 7 : 22.

God's presence, and where the tribes gathered themselves together for public worship. It was divided into three parts, the court of the tabernacle, about 150 feet long, and 75 feet wide, surrounded on all sides, by linen curtains five cubits in height, fastened with rods of silver accacia (shittim wood). The entrance was on the east side, and was closed by letting fall a sort of tapestry, and opened by drawing it up. In the middle of the western side of this court, was the Tabernacle, properly so called, being covered in every part, and of an oblong square, 30 cubits long from west to east, and 10 cubits broad from north to south. This was divided into two parts, *the holy*, in which was the golden candlestick, the table of shewbread, on which were placed in two piles, twelve unleavened loaves, as a symbol of the offerings they were to make to their theocratic King, and the altar of incense ; *the holy of holies*, in which was the ark of the covenant, and into which it was lawful for no person to enter, except the high priest on the day of propitiation. It was the outer court into which David probably entered, and received from Ahimelech the bread he needed. *Shewbread*, or *bread of the presence* or *face*, so called because it was placed before the face or presence of Jehovah, as the royal table is spread in the presence of an earthly king. *But* ; literally, *except*, referring to the words, *was not lawful*.

5. Another example of necessary labor on the Sabbath, acknowledged by the Jews themselves to be sinless, is drawn from the service of the priests in killing, flaying, dressing, and burning

the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

6 But I say unto you, that in this place is <sup>f</sup> *one* greater than the temple.

7 But if ye had known what

*f*2 Ch. 6: 18; Mal. 3: 1.

sacrifices, and baking shewbread (Levit. 24: 8) on the Sabbath, which if done by persons upon whom no such necessity was laid, would have been a violation of the day. *In the law*, i. e. the revealed law. See Numb. 28: 9, 10, 18, 19. As Steir well remarks, not only does sacred history furnish examples of exception to the law of the Sabbath from necessity, but the law itself ordains work to be done on the Sabbath as a duty. *In the temple*, where the desecration of the Sabbath might least be expected. This is added as a heightening circumstance, if the priests really profaned the Sabbath by their labors, as they did, if the doctrine laid down by the Pharisees, in their charge against the disciples, was correct. *Profane the sabbath*. Not really so, but by doing what in other circumstances would have been a profanation. *Are blameless*, because what they did was the necessary discharge of duty. Thus by these two examples, drawn the one from David, their most honored king, the other from their own priests, Christ triumphantly shows, that a work of necessity is no violation of the Sabbath.

6. Having thus established the principle, Jesus shows in this verse, that the act of his disciples fell within its provisions. If in the temple worship, a priest might labor on the Sabbath, and yet be blameless, his disciples would on like principle be blameless, in doing what was necessary in the service of One, who was far greater than the temple. They were faint and hungry, and their labors must not be rendered ineffective by exhausted bodily strength. It was necessary to the active discharge of their duties, as disciples and followers of Christ, that they should take sustenance. According to the principle of

*this* meaneth, <sup>g</sup> I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

*g* Ho. 6: 6; Mt. 6: 6, 7, 8; ch. 9: 13.

necessity just established, they had been guilty of no profanation of the Sabbath. *In this place*. Our Lord may have made some gesture, indicative of a reference to himself. *Greater* in respect to the importance of the service due to him. This is the point in which our Savior compares himself with the temple. But the temple service was ordained of God, being founded upon the tabernacle service, instituted according to the pattern shown to Moses in the Mount (Heb. 8: 5). In asserting that his service was superior to the temple service, Christ, therefore, gives precedence to his service, over that which had been divinely constituted, which was no less than claiming to be God, and to have spoken which, had he not been truly God, would have been the rankest blasphemy. It is worthy of remark, that the word translated *greater*, is taken by many editors and commentators, as a neuter, *something greater, a greater thing*, i. e. a greater service or work than the temple service. But the sense is the same. A superiority is claimed, which no created being could properly have assumed.

7. Our Lord again refers to the passage quoted in 9: 13 (on which see N.), to show that acts of piety and goodness are to be preferred to outward forms and ordinances. *If ye had known*. If ye had fully comprehended the import. *Ye would have not condemned the guiltless* (i. e. my disciples), who are engaged in such works of love and mercy in my service.

8. The general sense of this passage will be rendered clear, by regarding v. 7, as parenthetical, and connecting this in thought with v. 6, as furnishing a reason, why Christ's superiority to the temple would warrant his setting aside any ceremonial institution. *For*

9 <sup>h</sup> And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue.

*h* Ma. 3 : 1 ; Lu. 6 : 6.

*the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath*, i. e. has an absolute right to repeal the law of the Sabbath, or modify it as he pleases. This is one of the strongest proof-texts of Christ's divinity, to be found in the whole Bible. What created being would dare to assert his supremacy over any divine enactment, and power to abrogate or abridge the strictness of its claims? It would be blasphemy of the deepest dye thus to do. Mark introduces before this verse these words, "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath : therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." The sense of this is, that the Sabbath was intended as a blessing and help to man in the service of his Maker, and was not an arbitrary institution, to press him down by its burdensome duties and requirements. It was made for man, and therefore the Son of man, having assumed man's nature, and become his full and perfect representative and head, has it under his own power. The connective, *therefore*, in Mark, has led some critics to regard *Son of man*, as put for *man* in general, and to interpret the passage, as teaching that man is the lord and umpire of the Sabbath, constituted as it was for his benefit. But the phrase *the Son of man*, as Bloomfield remarks, occurs in 87 places, besides this, in the New Testament, and in every instance refers to him as Messiah. What slender ground is there then for wresting it, in this place, from its invariable meaning. The word translated, *therefore*, in Mark may be rendered, *moreover*, introducing another reason why the Sabbath was not to be regarded as superior to the claims of humanity and mercy, viz. that the Son of man was its Lord, and could abrogate it if he saw fit. In this way, *therefore* in Mark harmonizes with *for* in Matthew. We are not to suppose from this passage that our Lord has abrogated any of the claims or sanc-

10 And behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered. And they asked him, saying,

tions of the Sabbath. He only asserts his power to do this, and thus shows that in his service and for the benefit of man, things may be done on that day, which in other circumstances and relations are forbidden. Hence the criticism is groundless, which makes Jesus claim to be Lord of the *Sabbath*, but not of the *Sabbath law*.

9-14. JESUS HEALS A WITHERED HAND ON THE SABBATH. *Galilee*. Mark 3 : 1-6 ; Luke 6 : 6-11.

9. *And when he was departed thence*, on his way to Galilee. See N. on v. 1. *Their synagogue*, i. e. the synagogue of the people among whom he had come, but not necessarily, as Trench thinks, the synagogue of those with whom he had just disputed. He was now probably in some city or town of Galilee. Luke says, that it was on another Sabbath day, that he entered into the synagogue, most likely the one immediately following that, in which he passed through the corn-fields.

10. *A withered hand*; literally, a *dry hand*, withered and shrunken, as though the juices or moisture had been dried up through heat; an *atrophy* of the hand, attended with a withering away, and an inability to move the nerves and muscles. Dr. Jahn ranks it under *cataplexy*, or a species of palsy, in which the limb remains fixed and motionless, in the same position in which it was, when first struck with the disease. It has ever been regarded as an incurable disease. *And they asked him*. Luke (6 : 7) says "the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day, that they might find accusation against him," and that Christ knowing their thoughts, commanded the man to rise up and stand forth in the midst of the assembly. So also Mark (3 : 3). It was at this point of the transaction, that the Pharisees made the inquiry recorded only by Matthew : *Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?*



'Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.

11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and <sup>k</sup>if it fall into a pit on the

<sup>i</sup> Lu. 13: 14, & 14: 3; John 9: 16.

a question implying in itself, a strong denial of the lawfulness of the act. With a sort of pious horror, they thus exclaim against this profanation of the day.

11. Our Savior replies to their question, as he was wont to do, by proposing another, in which he brings forward an additional class of acts, viz. those of *mercy*, to be added to the works of *necessity*, permitted by him in the previous discourse with the Pharisees in the corn-field, to be done on the sabbath day. This appears clearly from the parallel passage in Luke, where, as Trench well observes, our Lord shows that the alternative is not in doing or not doing, as they had put it, but in doing or failing to do good, about which there could be no question, since we are bound to do good and shun evil at all times. In this question, as recorded by Matthew, he shows that his accusers themselves acted on the principle, in their effort to save an animal from death, which had fallen into a pit on the sabbath day. See N. on the following verse. *What man, &c.* The question is twofold, like that in 7: 9. The simple form would be: Who of you that has one sheep, if it fall, &c.—will not lay hold, &c. But this construction would have been less emphatic. The idea is not that one sheep only was possessed, but the falling into a pit of one only, out of a flock of perhaps several hundred. This heightens the force of our Lord's argument, that to save one sheep, which would scarcely be missed from the flock, such strenuous efforts should be made on the sabbath day. *A pit.* In Luke 14: 5, it is *a well*. They were excavations in the fields answering for cisterns, into

sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift *it* out?

12 How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.

13 Then saith he to the man,

<sup>k</sup> See Ex. 23: 4, 5; De. 22: 4.

which animals sometimes stumbled and fell. *Lay hold on it and lift it out.* These words are expressive of the haste and energy of effort to save the animal. At the time of our Savior, this was lawful. It was afterwards forbidden (as Steir suggests, on account of these words of Christ), and planks only were laid for the beast to come out itself.

12. *How much then is a man better.* How much more valuable his life and happiness, and with how much greater pains should his wants be attended to, and his infirmities removed. The argument is both *a fortiori* (see N. on 5: 15), and what logicians call *ad hominem*, i. e. reasoning upon their own grounds or principles. As they thought it not wrong to save the life of a sheep on the sabbath day, they could find no fault with the more important service he was about to render the man, who stood before him. They were right in performing deeds of mercy to the brute creation on the Sabbath; he was also right, in administering relief to the man on that day. *To do well*, i. e. to perform acts of mercy and benevolence.

13. It appears from Mark and Luke, that previously to performing the cure, he proposed in turn a question to the Pharisees, by which he hinted at their murderous designs upon himself, and rebuked their hypocritical pretensions of regard for the sanctity of the Sabbath. "Is it lawful to do good (as I am doing) on the sabbath days, or to do evil (as is your practice)? to save life or to kill (as you are endeavoring to do in planning my destruction)?" With a holy indignation and grief at such hypocrisy and wickedness, he looked around upon them, after which he said to the man, *Stretch forth*

Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* forth; and *it* was restored whole, like as the other.

14 Then <sup>1</sup> the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

1 Ch. 27 : 1; Ma. 3 : 6; Lu. 6 : 11; Jn. 5 : 18, & 10 : 39, & 11 : 53.

*thine hand.* No outward act was here performed, as was usual with our Lord, but a simple command, and thus his enemies had no legal ground of charging him with a violation of the Sabbath. The dignity and solemnity of the whole scene, was such as to stop their mouth from any reply, although how deeply they felt his stern rebuke, is seen from what Luke says, that "they were filled with madness," and from the fact, that they immediately went forth, and consulted together how they might put him to death. *Stretch forth.* The very thing which he had in himself no power to do. Yet he obeyed the command, and his obedience was accompanied with the necessary power. Thus in the work of personal salvation, obedience to the requisitions of the gospel will always be attended with divine aid and influence, and so harmonious and contemporaneous will be our own and the divine agency, that it will appear as though the power was all lodged in ourselves, even though in the light of God's word, and the experience we have of our own spiritual helplessness, we know that it all comes from above. *It was restored whole;* literally, *it was established or made quite whole.* The word denotes a complete and permanent cure.

14. *Went out* from the synagogue. They left it with a pretended horror at the defilement of the Sabbath. *Held a council,* i. e. consulted together. Mark (3 : 6) says that they took counsel with the Herodians, or partisans of Herod Antipas, the political opponents of the Pharisees, being stanch supporters of the Roman authority in Palestine. If, as is probable, this political sect embraced many of the chief men of the Sadducees, their religious tenets also

15 But when Jesus knew *it*, <sup>m</sup>he withdrew himself from thence: <sup>n</sup>and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all;

16 And <sup>o</sup>charged them that they should not make him known:

<sup>m</sup> See ch. 10 : 23; Ma. 3 : 7.

<sup>n</sup> Ch. 19 : 2.

<sup>o</sup> Ch. 9 : 30.

were adverse to the Pharisees. Yet, with these political and religious opponents, they hold an amicable consultation to destroy Jesus. Thus do we often see wicked men uniting to oppose religion or great social reforms, and like Pilate and Herod, becoming friends, when Jesus is to be crucified, or his gospel opposed. This was the first consultation of the kind reported to us. From this time onward, it was the great object of their solicitude, to find some legal pretence to put him to death.

15-21. MULTITUDES FOLLOW JESUS TO THE SEA OF TIBERIAS. *Lake of Galilee.* Mark 3 : 7-12.

15. *Knew it,* i. e. their murderous designs. *He withdrew himself from thence* (see 10 : 23). The time had not come when he was to be delivered up to them, and therefore he temporarily withdrew from his enemies. Mark says that he went with his disciples to the sea of Galilee. See N. on Mark 3 : 7. *Great multitudes followed him.* They came from almost every quarter of the land (Mark 3 : 7), drawn together by the report of his wonderful works. *He healed them all,* i. e. all who were afflicted with maladies. We are indebted to Mark, for a more full account of his labors on this occasion, at the sea of Tiberias. The eagerness of the multitude, especially such as had diseases, to touch him was so great, that as a precautionary measure against being pressed by too large a crowd, a small ship was put in readiness to receive him, if it should be necessary. Many possessed with unclean spirits, as soon as they came into his presence, fell down before him, and acknowledged him to be the Son of God. See Mark 3 : 9-11.

16. *And charged them.* The con-

17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

18 <sup>p</sup> Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, <sup>q</sup> in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon him,

*p* Is. 42 : 1.

struction refers this to all the persons healed on this occasion, but in Mark it would seem to be especially directed to those, from whom he had cast out devils, and who were giving loud utterance to his being the true Messiah. Our Savior was now so beset by his insidious enemies, the Pharisees and Herodians, that it became prudent to avoid every thing adapted to embitter them against him. It did not comport also with his unostentatious spirit, that a display should be made of his mighty works. *Make him known*, i. e. blazen abroad his fame.

17. *That it might be fulfilled, &c.* See N. on 1 : 22.

18. This quotation from Isa. 42 : 1-4, is not in the exact words of the original, but yet adheres closely to the sense. The prophecy was fulfilled in the quiet, humble, unostentatious spirit, with which Jesus persecuted his work. He had withdrawn from the cities to a retired place by the sea. He had strictly enjoined silence in respect to his miracles. His whole demeanor corresponded exactly to the character given him in the prophecy referred to. *Behold my servant*. These words served to direct attention to the Messiah. Christ took upon himself the form of a servant. As Mediator he was in a state of subordination and servitude to the Father. See N. on 11 : 26. *Whom I have chosen for the office-work of the Messiah. My beloved, &c.* Almost the exact words of the voice from heaven, at the time of his baptism (3 : 17). *I will put my spirit upon him*. This also had a fulfilment at his baptism (3 : 16), and John also testified (3 : 34), that the influences of the Spirit were not enjoyed by him in limited measure. As

and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.

19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he

*q* Ch. 3 : 17, & 17 : 5.

God, our blessed Savior needed not the Spirit's influence, but as God-man, or God incarnate, having our nature in union with the divine, he received it to fit him for his mediatorial work. This twofold nature of Christ should ever be kept in mind, when we read such passages as this. As one of the persons of the Trinity, he was God, uncreated, eternal, independent; as God-man, he was born of woman, dependent and subject to all the ills and accidents of humanity, sin only excepted. *He shall show judgment, &c.* He shall make known to the Gentiles the principles of rectitude and justice, as found in the divine law, and illustrated in the gospel. His dignity and judicial power as Messiah, is here contrasted with his meekness and gentleness about to be spoken of. We find in Mark (3 : 8), that of the multitude which followed him to the sea, there were some from about Tyre and Sidon. The Gentiles (in this case probably proselytes) were thus already beginning to enjoy that gospel, which, in subsequent times, was to be preached to them more fully by Christ's apostles and ministers.

19. *He shall not strive nor cry, i. e.* shall not shout as a warrior, nor be a noisy, brawling demagogue, striving for supremacy. The same sentiment is contained in the next clause, *neither shall any man, &c.* i. e. he shall not frequent public places of resort, or harangue in public assemblies, as is done by ambitious men.

20. *A bruised reed, &c.* A proverbial expression. The cane or reed is a tender plant of many joints and easily broken. The fearful, humble soul, whose faith wavers under trial, is here aptly represented by one of these reeds,

not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

22 ¶ Then was brought unto

† See ch. 9 : 32 ; Ma. 3 : 11 ; Lu. 11 : 14.

almost severed from the stem, and liable, by rude handling, to be entirely broken off. But such is the tenderness of the Messiah, that he will gently raise up and strengthen the bruised and broken plant, and cause it to adhere again firmly to the supporting stem. So also his kind and gentle treatment of the humble and penitent, whose piety has been nearly extinct, is represented in the following clause by the *smoking flax*, or the wick of a lamp, out of which the oil has been exhausted, and burning with a feeble and smoky flame, as if about to expire. This flame shall not be entirely quenched, but oil shall be supplied, and it shall again give forth a clear light. Thus the nearly extinct piety of the humble soul, shall be renovated and made bright and clear, under the kind and gentle care of the Redeemer. *Till he send forth judgment*, &c. Until truth shall be victorious over the whole earth. The word *judgment* here, as in v. 20, is put for the divine statutes, the law illustrated and enforced in the gospel. It is erroneous to suppose with some, that reference is had to the vengeance taken upon the Jews for their rejection of the gospel. Nor does the word *till* here imply, that when truth was thus triumphant, the Messiah's kindness and gentleness towards his people would come to an end, but it rather denotes perpetuity; *until then and certainly never afterwards*, seems to be its full meaning. See 5 : 18. This general sense does not forbid its special application to the humble believer, towards whom this gentleness, forbearance, and support will be exercised, until death, with all its attendant evils, shall be swallowed up in victory.

21. *And in his name*, &c. The greatest apparent discrepancy, between the words here quoted and the original, is

him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

23 And all the people were

found in this verse. But the difference is only verbal. The word *isles* in Hebrew usage was put for remote or distant nations, not Jews but Gentiles. The sense of the original is then well preserved in the word *Gentiles*, employed in this quotation. Nor is the word *law* misinterpreted by *name* in this verse. For to trust in God's name is to obey his law, or, as expressed in Isaiah, *to wait for his law*. The sense is therefore essentially the same. There are besides some words omitted in the quotation which are found in the original, and a slight change in others. Yet the general sense is transferred with remarkable accuracy, and no ground is furnished to cavillers that the citation is inaccurately made.

22-37. THE HEALING OF A DEMONIAK. THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES BLASPHEMIE. *Galilee*. Mark 3 : 19-30 ; Luke 14, 15, 17-23. Following the order of Mark, Dr. Robinson places the healing of this demoniak, and the blasphemy of the scribes and Pharisees, after the appointment of the twelve, and during his second circuit in Galilee. The miracle was probably performed on the morning of that day, on which Christ delivered the parable of the sower (13 : 1), and on the evening of which he crossed the sea, and went into the country of the Gadarenes (8 : 28-34).

22. *There was brought unto him*. Our Lord was at this time in a house (Mark 3 : 19). This should be remembered, in order to understand why his mother and brethren could not reach him on account of the crowd (v. 46 ; Luke 8 : 19). *Blind and dumb*. This possession was one of no common violence, as is evident from the amazement with which the cure was witnessed by the people.

23. *Were amazed* ; literally, *were be-*



amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David ?

24 'But when the Pharisees heard *it*, they said, This *fellow* doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

25 And Jesus 'knew their

*s* Ch. 9:34; Ma. 3:22; Lu. 11:15.

*side themselves* through astonishment. *And said one to another. Is not this; literally, whether perchance is this? i. e. may not this perhaps be? The people may have expressed themselves thus doubtfully, through fear of the Pharisees. The son of David.* The Messiah, descended from the line of David. See Ns. on 1:1; 9:27. The people rightly supposed, that such power over demons belonged to no ordinary personage, and regarded the miracle, as it was intended to be, a proof of the Messiahship of Jesus.

24. *But when the Pharisees heard it, i. e. this inference from his works in favor of his Messiahship.* Mark says (3:22) that these were scribes which came from Jerusalem. They were perhaps the same persons who had followed him from Jerusalem, and brought the accusation against his disciples in the cornfields (12:2), and who had been doubtless deputed by the rulers to attend him from place to place, to watch his words and actions, in order to find something of which they might accuse him. *This fellow doth not cast out, &c.* A strong negative affirmation of what is expressed in the positive form in Mark and Luke. The sense is this: there is not a demon which he casts out, in which he is not aided thereto by Beelzebub (see N. on 9:34), the prince of devils. He is therefore an impostor, doing nothing wonderful, except through the agency of his master the devil. It is worthy of note, that they did not deny the reality of his miracles. This they could not do. As they were believers in only one God, if they did not attribute the works of Christ to Him, they had no resource left, but to charge upon him collusion with the great adversary.

thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself, is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself, shall not stand.

26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how

*t* Ch. 9:4; John 2:25; Re. 2:23.

25. *Knew their thoughts.* See John, 2:25. What accumulative evidence do we find, as we pass along, of the divinity of our Savior. *Every kingdom divided, &c.* Our Lord answers this wicked and malicious charge by showing its absurdity. By reference to a well-known saying, that a kingdom or house divided against itself is soon brought to ruin, he shows the absurdity of supposing, that Satan would use him as an instrument to cast out devils, which he had himself empowered to enter into and torment men. This would be to destroy his own work. By such contradictory action his kingdom would soon come to an end. The argument is what is called, *reductio ad absurdum*, or the argument *ab absurdo*, i. e. proving the falsity of an argument or assertion by showing its absurdity. Trench well remarks (Miracles, p. 58), that Jesus "does not deny that the kingdom of Satan, in respect to itself, is infinite contradiction and division, but only asserts that in relation to the kingdom of goodness, it is at one: there is one life in it and one soul in relation to that."

26. This verse contains the applications of the preceding principle to the case in hand. *Satan.* See N. on 4:10. *Is divided against himself,* i. e. is employing my agency to dispossess men of the unclean spirits, which he has commissioned to go into them. *Stand,* i. e. continue to flourish. Alford remarks that "our Lord here in the most solemn manner re-asserts and confirms the truths respecting the kingdom of evil, which the Jews also held. The kingdoms [of evil and good] are so set parallel with one another, that the denial of the reality of the one with its *prince*, or the supposing it founded, merely in assent on the part of our

shall then his kingdom stand?

27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast *them* out? therefore they shall be your judges.

u Da. 2: 44, & 7: 14; Lu. 1: 33, & 11: 20, & 17: 20, 21.

Lord to Jewish notions, inevitably brings with it the same conclusions, with regard to the other."

27. *By whom* (i. e. by what agency) *do your children*, &c. Christ here silences them by referring to their own practice and belief, in the argument *ad hominum* (see N. on v. 12). The Jews believed in exorcisms. Their exorcists, called here the children (i. e. disciples) of the Pharisees, pretended to eject demons, and persuaded the common people that they really did so. Now the argument of Christ was this: You believe that your children the exorcists cast out devils, but charge me with doing this by Satanic influence. Why are you so inconsistent, as to accuse me of collusion with Satan, and not your exorcists? This reasoning of Christ is perfectly lawful. It is employed to illustrate their inconsistency, and show their hypocrisy, as he had in vs. 26, 27, shown the falseness of their charge. Such illustrations may be drawn from any source. A missionary may be conversing with a learned Brahmin, respecting the incarnation of our Savior. He treats the idea with contempt and begins to start difficulties respecting it. The missionary replies that he is the last person, who should offer objections of this sort, since he believes in ten incarnations of his god Vishnu. The missionary does not by this reasoning admit the truth of these incarnations, or that such a god as Vishnu ever existed. Nor does our Savior acknowledge the reality of these pretended exorcisms, but only uses this form of argument to show, that on their own principles they ought not to charge him with casting out devils by Beelzebub. That their cures were pretended and incomplete is evident from 9: 33, where in view of the perfect cure of the dumb man pos-

28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then "the kingdom of God is come unto you.

29 " Or else, how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first

æ Is. 49: 24; Lu. 11: 21, 22, 23.

sessed with a devil, the people said that "it was never so seen in Israel," i. e. no such cure had ever been effected. *Therefore*, i. e. in consequence of such inconsistency and hypocrisy. *Shall be your judges*, "in the sense of convicting you of partiality." Alford.

28. *But if* (as you must admit) *I cast out devils by the Spirit of God* (i. e. by divine power), *then the kingdom of God is come unto you*, and you are bound to receive me as the accredited messenger of God, and give heed to my instructions. This was the only alternative to their absurd and hypocritical charge of his collusion with Beelzebub. The verb, *is come*, may be more literally rendered, *has already come*, before you expected it, or was aware of it.

29. The general sentiment of this verse is, that Christ was not aided by Satan in casting out demons, inasmuch as his power was superior to that of Satan. It could not therefore be the exercise of human power, but must come from God. *Or else*, i. e. if it be as you affirm, that I am acting under the authority of Beelzebub. *How can one*, &c. This illustration was natural and apposite. The point is, that unless Satan willingly suffered himself to be despoiled of his power, the absurdity of which was shown in v. 25, the power of Christ in expelling demons, was as manifestly superior to that of Satan, as the power of the spoiler is superior to that of the strong man bound and despoiled. Here then, as in vs. 2-8, he not only refutes the charge made against him, but rises in his argument, to the assertion of his higher divine nature, which makes him Lord of heaven and earth, with power to bind and crush the powers of darkness at his pleasure.

30. *He that is not with me*, &c. This is a proverbial expression, showing in its

bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

30 He that is not with me, is

connection here, that there can be no neutral ground between Christ and Satan. *Is against me*, i. e. belongs to the opposite party. *Gathereth not with me*. A metaphorical expression taken from the gathering of sheaves together in the time of harvest, or as some think, from the gathering of sheep into the fold. Reference is had to co-operation with Christ, in carrying out his purposes of love and mercy towards our fallen race. Where that co-operation is wanting, it may be certain that it is actively exerted on the side of the kingdom of Satan. It was this certainty that the Pharisees were themselves in league with Satan in opposing Christ, that gave occasion for the remarkable declaration which follows.

31, 32. Our Lord now proceeds to administer to these wicked Pharisees one of the most awful warnings ever made to man. He tells them of a sin of such deep and aggravated turpitude, as to be beyond the reach of forgiveness in this and in the future world. The sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost taught in this passage, is not easy of explanation. One thing is quite evident, that it consists in words malignantly spoken against the power of the Holy Ghost working in Christ Jesus. The Pharisees are virtually charged with having committed this crime. It was beyond dispute that a demon had been cast out of the deaf and dumb man. No human power could have effected this. There was evidently a divine interposition. None could be so blind as not to see this. But the Pharisees attributed the miracle to the agency of Satan. They did it deliberately, and in face of the highest evidence that their charge was false and unfounded. What sin more heaven-daring and aggravated than this? Mark (3 : 30) gives this as the particular ground of our Lord's denunciation, "because they said, He hath an unclean spirit," i. e. casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. In this consisted their

against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.

31 Wherefore I say unto you,

dreadful sin. They had attributed to the devil one of the highest acts of Omnipotence. No conceivable sin could be greater than this. Doddridge with Whitby takes this as a warning to the Pharisees, that while such impious words spoken against Jesus might be forgiven, yet when uttered against the dispensation of the Spirit, to come afterwards on the day of Pentecost, they would be beyond forgiveness. But was not the Holy Ghost given to Christ without measure (John 3 : 34), and was it a less heinous sin to charge the work of the Holy Spirit wrought in Christ to the agency of the devil, than the work of that same Spirit, manifested in the teachings and miracles of his followers? Certainly not. There was no manifestation of the Spirit so clear, glorious, powerful, as was made in Christ Jesus. Archbishop Secker well remarks : " It was the greatest and most willful obstinacy in wrong that can be imagined, when they and all around them saw the most illustrious and beneficial miracles, done in confirmation of the most holy and benevolent doctrines, to stand out in opposition to both; to insist that the devil conspired against himself, rather than own the finger of God, when it was so exceeding visible; not only to oppose, but to revile, the strongest evidence laid before them in the fullest manner, and that very probably against the conviction of their own hearts, such behavior manifests the most hardened and desperate wickedness." When in addition to these considerations, we again take into view the express declaration of Mark, that Jesus uttered these words against the Pharisees, because they said, "He hath an unclean spirit," we cannot but regard the opinion of Doddridge and others, who refer the sin to the calumination of the gifts of the Spirit after Christ's ascension, as untenable.

This reference of the sin here spoken of, to words uttered by the Pharisees

“All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: <sup>z</sup> but

<sup>y</sup> Ma. 3: 28; Lu. 12: 10; He. 6: 4, &c., & 10: 26, 29; 1 Jn. 5: 16.

against the Holy Spirit, not as operating in Christ, but in his followers after his ascension, has led to confused and erroneous views, as to that in which the sin consists. It has been quite common with many, to refer it to what is called sinning away the day of grace, doing despite to the Holy Spirit, &c. While it is not to be denied, that these sins are somewhat allied in their dreadful results, to the sin here spoken of, yet it is very clear they do not constitute the sin. It is an offence, which casts far into the background any other sin which men commit. Whether this particular sin is of frequent occurrence is quite uncertain. It probably is not. We know that there is such a sin, that it consists in blasphemous words against the Holy Ghost, and that when once committed it inevitably seals up the doom of the offender. This should cause every bold transgressor to pause in his wicked career, lest he should fall under its condemnation.

Having thus spoken of this sin in its general aspects, some verbal explanations claim our attention. *Wherefore*, i. e. on account of the impious words of the Pharisees, the sin of which is shown in the verse immediately preceding. *I say unto you*. A solemn and emphatic introduction, frequently employed by our Lord, when about to utter some weighty truth. See 6: 29; 18: 10, 19, &c. *All manner of sin*; literally, *all sin, every sin*. Our English translation has misled many to suppose, that certain kinds of sin or sinful states of mind are here referred to, and therefore that the great sin with which they are compared, is also some state or condition of the mind, embracing all flagrant sins against the Spirit, such as grieving Him away by obstinate and continued resistance, sinning away the day of grace by remaining, in times of religious excitement, careless and unalarmed, and by acts of procrastination, like that of Felix, all which sins, if be-

the blasphemy *against* the *Holy Ghost* shall not be forgiven unto men.

<sup>z</sup> Ac. 7: 51.

yond the reach of forgiveness, must be included in the one here spoken of. But the subject is narrowed down to a contrast between any single sin or kind of blasphemy, and that which is against the Holy Ghost. Besides the sins referred to above, are states of the mind, resulting from a series of sins, and not one bold, calumnious, blasphemous word or act against the Holy Ghost. Nor is it certain that the above-mentioned sins are beyond the reach of God's mercy, if the sinner will humbly apply for pardon through Christ. He may indeed have reached so callous a frame of mind, as to make no such application for pardon, and thus his damnation may be virtually sealed up long before his death. But this is different from affirming, that his state is such, that if he applied for forgiveness and salvation, it would be denied him. The discourse of our Savior here is not about hardened and seared consciences, or unreformable habits of sin which so alienate the soul from God, that it makes no efforts to obtain forgiveness, but it is concerning one great and deadly sin, which, when committed, renders forgiveness absolutely impossible, whatever may be done afterwards to secure it. If this is not taught here in the plainest language, no words can be found to do so. Olshausen finds a threefold gradation of sins in this passage. “All manner of sin and blasphemy.” He refers to sins against God the Father, committed by those who have only a general knowledge of God. The sins against the Son are committed by such as being more advanced and able to recognize the Son of man, are in a position to reject the deeper and more spiritual revelations of the Divinity manifested in him. The sin against the Holy Ghost is theirs, who have experienced in their hearts the workings of the Holy Ghost. Olshausen's views of this whole subject appear confused and un-



32 And whosoever <sup>a</sup> speaketh a word against the Son of man, <sup>b</sup> it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy

a Ch. 11 : 19, & 13 : 55; John 7 : 12 : 52.

satisfactory, as do those of all expositors, who depart from the simple teachings of the text. *Shall be forgiven*, in case forgiveness is asked through Jesus Christ, and with a penitent, believing heart. *Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*, i. e. attributing to the devil what is clearly the work of the Holy Spirit, casting so great an insult upon the Spirit of holiness, as to ascribe his manifest works to the adversary of God and man. *Shall not be forgiven*, even if forgiveness were asked. This sense is demanded by the antithesis. The forgiveness of *all manner of sin* is not promised, irrespective of faith and repentance, on the part of the sinner. On the other hand forgiveness of the sin against the Holy Ghost is not denied, because not sought in faith and penitence, for this would be true of every sin; but it is denied on account of its intrinsic turpitude, which renders it unpardonable, whatever efforts may be subsequently made to obtain forgiveness. It is not probable that one who has committed this sin will ever afterwards be brought into such a frame of mind, as to ask for pardon through Christ, but even if he should be, the dreadful words, *shall not be forgiven*, would still remain recorded against his sin. *Unto men* (in Mark, "sons of men," with the same signification), is repeated in this verse for the sake of emphasis.

32. In this verse, the sin of which Christ is speaking is more definitely defined. *Speaketh a word*, &c. Reference is had to words of contempt, spoken against Christ, in his low and obscure condition. The humiliation of Christ, as Son of man, is here contrasted with his higher nature, as manifested by his works and doctrine. Words uttered against him as an obscure man were pardonable. The humble condition in which he ap-

peared, might excite at first emotions of contempt in many, who afterwards, in view of his mighty works, would acknowledge him as the Messiah, and be pardoned for their previous unbelief and contemptuous words. But those who should speak against the Holy Ghost, or those miraculous powers by which Christ's higher nature, as God-man, was made known, could never receive forgiveness. This contrast between his two natures, the one represented by the phrase *Son of man*, the other or higher nature by the *Holy Ghost*, given to him without measure (John 3 : 34), and through whom he was "declared to be the Son of God with power" (Rom. 1 : 3), makes the passage plain and easy of interpretation. We are not to suppose, that this sin against the Holy Ghost consists in opprobrious words only. The phrase, *speareth against*, is put generically for any manifestation of contempt, serving as an index of the impiety and unbelief within. *In this world*, i. e. during his present life. *In the world to come*. By contrast, the future existence of a man. The expression, *world to come*, is used by the New Testament writers, of the Messianic dispensation, beginning with the appearance of Christ on earth, and fully developed at the final arrangement and confirmation of all things, at the day of judgment. Hence it is employed in general, to denote the spiritual, endless existence beyond the grave, upon which all after death must enter. The whole expression, "neither in this world, neither in the world to come," is beyond all question an emphatic NEVER. Olshausen and some others, from a wrong interpretation of 1 Pet. 3 : 18, understand the passage to imply forgiveness on repentance in the imperfect state of the dead before judgment; but the phrase, *world to come*, is here added, to give emphasis and complete-

33 Either make the tree good,

b 1 Ti. 1 : 13.

and 'his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit.

34 O <sup>d</sup> generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? 'for out of the abun-

<sup>c</sup> Ch. 7: 17; Lu. 6: 43, 44. <sup>d</sup> Ch. 3: 7, & 23: 33.

ness to the idea, and not to teach by implication or otherwise, that all other sins than blasphemy against the Holy Ghost are pardoned in the future state. This is neither taught here, nor in 1 Pet. 3: 18, and is directly at war with many other passages, expressly declaring the immutability of the soul's condition beyond the grave.

33. The sentiment of this verse is: If I do good, consider me as good, and act consistently. It connects in sense with the argument in v. 30, showing the inconsistency of the Pharisees, in charging him with evil, when his works were good. *Make the tree good, &c.* i. e. regard the tree as good, if the fruit be pronounced good. *Corrupt.* See N. on 7: 17. *For the tree is known, &c.* This criterion of character is founded on an universal law of the natural world, to which the law of the moral world is strictly analogous. The character of a man is determined by his actions. The Pharisees could be at no loss in respect to our Lord's true character, inasmuch as his life, and the tendency of his doctrines were good. They had no excuse, therefore, for their malicious charge of his collusion with Satan.

34. *O generation of vipers.* See N. on 3: 7. *How can ye, &c.* A strong expression of what is deemed impossible. The law that *like proceeds from like*, which prevails in the moral no less than in the natural world, would prevent the Pharisees, who were evil, from bringing forth good fruit, here denoted by *speaking good things.* *For out of the abundance, &c.* By this proverbial expression, we are taught that words or outward acts, are an index of the

dance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.

35 A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things: and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things.

36 But I say unto you, That

<sup>e</sup> Lu. 6: 45.

state of the heart within, and when that abounds in corrupt and abominable thoughts, there will be a necessary expression of them in words. *Abundance*; literally, *what is over and above, the superabundance*, denoting that evil words are merely the overflowings of a wicked heart, and make no draft upon the treasury of evil within. What a vivid picture of the deeply-rooted and abounding depravity of the human heart. See Ns. on 15: 18-20.

35. *A good man, &c.* The same general truth that the heart is the fountain, whence proceed good or evil words and actions, is here expressed by a simile drawn from a treasury or storehouse, where are laid away things for future use. The mind is the storehouse of thoughts, feelings, desires, plans, which are developed in words and acts, giving evidence of the character within. A good man will be known by his blameless life and actions; an evil man, in like manner, will be convicted by his evil doings and corrupt words.

36. The relation of words or outward acts to the heart within, is here represented as determining character, at the day of judgment. The word rendered *idle*, has furnished some difficulty as to its precise sense in this connection. Some refer it back to the calumnious charge of the Pharisees. Others take it in a more general sense of, *rash, presumptuous, impious*, as applied to other subjects than blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. A better sense than either of these interpretations, may be obtained by connecting it with the general sentiment advanced in the preceding verse. We may then

every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

f Ch. 16 : 1 ; Ma. 8 : 11 ; Lu. 11 : 16, 29 ; Jn. 2 : 18 ; 1 Co. 1 : 22.

explain it *idle, useless, false*, referring particularly to the hypocritical zeal of the Pharisees for the honor of religion, expressed in words of apparent sincerity, but uttered with evil purpose. Of course there is embraced in these idle, useless, insincere words, the incidental idea of evil, and especially so from the connection with v. 35. Tholuck thus paraphrases the passage : " Believe me, he who uses false and insincere language, shall suffer grievous punishment ; your words, if uttered with sincerity and ingenuousness, shall be approved ; but if they are dissembled, although they may bear the strongest appearance of integrity, they shall be condemned." *Shall give account thereof*, i. e. shall answer for its utterance, or give a reason why it was spoken. The phrase is a judicial one.

37. This verse illustrates and confirms the sentiment of the preceding one, by showing the rule of judgment, at the day of final account. *For by thy words*, &c. Words, proceeding as they do from the overflowing of a good or evil heart, furnish a decisive test of character. See N. on v. 34. The words of a man form no inconsiderable portion of his acts. These, if good, will constitute under grace, (not under law, Rom. 3 : 20,) a ground of justification. So also will wicked words be a ground of condemnation, inasmuch as they show clearly the wickedness of the heart. In the light of this passage, what care should be exercised over the words, which daily fall from our lips. We may forget them, but they are all treasured up in the book of God's remembrance, and will be brought forward, at the last day, for our justification or condemnation.

38-45. THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES

38<sup>f</sup> Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

39 But he answered and said to them, An evil and<sup>g</sup> adulterous

g Is. 57 : 3 ; ch. 16 : 4 ; Ma. 8 : 38 ; John 4 : 48.

SEEK A SIGN. *Galilee.* Luke 11 : 16, 24-36.

38. *Then certain of the scribes, &c.* These, as it appears from the parallel passage in Luke 11 : 16, were not those who had blasphemously accused him of being in league with Satan, although they had doubtless heard the accusation and its answer. They appear to have taken up the conversation when the others were silenced, and made the request that he would show them a sign from heaven. They wished to appear in the eyes of the common people, as seekers after truth, and ready to yield to any reasonable evidence of Christ's divine mission. It is as though they had said : We acknowledge that you appear to do many very wonderful deeds, yet there is so much deception practised by all impostors, that on a subject of such moment, as the recognition of your claims to the Messiahship, we would see a sign on a grander scale. Show us then a sign from heaven (Luke 11 : 16). Let us have such overwhelming evidence from above, that there shall be no longer room for doubt. Such appears to be the connection of this passage with the preceding context. *Master.* A common term of respect to one who was attended by disciples. See N. on 9 : 11. *We would see a sign.* Luke says, " a sign from heaven." The Jews, from a misinterpretation of Dan. 7 : 13, supposed that the Messiah would manifest himself in some way from above. To this popular impression, the devil probably had a reference in the second temptation, as related by Matthew 4 : 6 (on which see N). They now ask of Jesus a celestial sign, something which should meet the general expectation of the manner, in which the Messiah should reveal him-

generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

self. His miracles thus far related to things upon the earth. They now wish for some display of his power in the visible heavens, as furnishing higher evidence of his Messiahship. This request was afterwards repeated. See 16: 1; Mark 8: 11. Compare also John 6: 30; 1 Cor. 1: 22. These references may help us to understand Matt. 24: 30. *From thee*, i. e. taking place at thy word or by thy authority.

39. *An evil and adulterous generation.* It appears from Luke (11: 29), that the people thronged together, either with the expectation of seeing some wonderful appearance in the heavens, or to hear what reply Jesus would make to the demand of these Pharisees. The word *adulterous* is here used in a spiritual sense. In the Old Testament usage, it refers to *idolatry*, the forsaking of the true God for those which were false. But as the Jews in Christ's time were not guilty of idol-worship, it refers here to practical infidelity, impiety, apostacy from spiritual religion. *Seeketh after*, with a cavilling and unbelieving spirit, and not as sincere and humble inquirers after truth. It is to be noted that our Lord does not censure them for requiring evidence of his Messiahship (see 16: 2, 3, where *signs of the times* is put for the evidence furnished by the miracles of Jesus), but for closing their eyes to that which had been so abundantly given, and demanding further and more convincing proof. *Shall no sign be given.* Our Savior continued to work miracles, but gave them no sign such as they required. *But the sign of the prophet Jonas.* The resurrection of Christ from the dead, of which the deliverance of Jonah from the fish's belly (*the belly of Hades*, Jonah 2: 2), was a remarkable type, is here for the first time in the recorded ministry of

40 <sup>a</sup> For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly: so shall the Son of man be three days and three

<sup>a</sup> Jon. 1: 17.

our Lord alluded to. This event was the crowning proof of his Messiahship, and was a sign, which ought to have removed every doubt from the Jewish people, as to his divine mission.

49. *For as Jonas, &c.* See Jonah 2: 1; 2: 10. *Three days and three nights.* See Jonah 1: 17. *In the whale's belly.* As whales are seldom, if ever, found in the Mediterranean, and as the throat of that fish is said to be too small to receive a man, it is generally supposed, that it was a shark, or some other large fish, which swallowed Jonah. The word here translated *whale*, signifies a *huge fish, a sea-monster*, and in later usage, it is applied to whales, sharks, tunnies, &c. It should be remembered that it is not said that Jonah was swallowed by a whale, but by a *great fish* (Jonah 1: 17). *So shall the Son of man, &c.* The resemblance consists in the time in which both Jonah and Christ were buried from human view, from which condition they were both raised by the power of God to life. Some find it difficult to reconcile with this the time, in which our Savior actually lay in the tomb. But the Jewish method of computing time was to reckon parts of days, as whole days. As they had no word to express a whole or natural day, they employed for this purpose the expression *day and night*. In the Jerusalem Talmud, quoted by Lightfoot, it is said, "that a day and night together make up a whole natural day, and that any part of such period is counted as the whole." Thus, although our Savior was only two nights and a part of three days in the tomb, yet the expression, *three days and three nights*, according to the Jewish mode of speaking, was a correct assertion in reference thereto. *In the heart of the earth*, is put for *in the earth*, the idea of completeness and entireness of burial being conveyed in the expression. The



nights in the heart of the earth.

41 <sup>i</sup> The men of Nineveh shall

<sup>i</sup> Lu. 11 : 32.

Jews sought a sign from heaven, but the sign which should be given them, was one from the depths of the earth, viz. Christ's resurrection from the dead. This was the great proof of his divine mission, and one to which the apostles confidently referred, when arguing with the unbelieving Jews. It is strange that Alford should find here no reference to the burial of our Lord's body in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, (inasmuch as that could not be said to be in the heart of the earth, nor was the 'Son of man' there during the time,) but to our Lord's *personal descent into the place of departed souls*. He seems to have overlooked the fact, that the recalling of our Lord's spirit or soul from Hades, would be to the Jews no sign at all, not being discernible by the natural senses, whereas a resurrection of his body from the tomb, animated, of course, with his soul, would be most palpable to the vision of all, to whom he chose to show himself. The whole person of our Lord, soul and body, is most unquestionably referred to.

41. This verse is introduced in Luke by the words, "for as Jonas was a sign to the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation," on which see Note. *The men of Nineveh*; literally, *the men Ninevites*. A form of expression common in Greek, signifying nothing more than *the Ninevites*, or *the people of Nineveh*. This celebrated city, situated on the Tigris, was declared by some ancient historians to have been even larger than Babylon. The walls are said to have been 100 feet high, and so broad that three chariots might be driven on them abreast. On these walls stood 1,500 towers, each 200 feet high, rendering the city well nigh impregnable. For 1450 years it was the mistress of the East, to which Babylon itself was subject. In the reign of Sardanapalus, B. C. 747, it was taken by the Medes and Babylonians, which terminated the Assyrian Empire. Two

rise in judgment with this generation, and <sup>k</sup> shall condemn it:

<sup>k</sup> See Je. 3 : 11; Ez. 16 : 51, 52; Ro. 2 : 27.

kingdoms from this time sprang up, the Assyrian and Babylonian. But when Esar-haddon took Babylon, for 54 years Nineveh became the capital again of both empires. On the conquest of Babylon by Nabopolassar, an Assyrian general, and father of Nebuchadnezzar, who made himself king, Nineveh began steadily to decline before the rising power of its rival city, until it fell before the united arms of the Medes and Babylonians, B. C. 633; after which time its decay was rapid and unchecked. Its ruins are now seen on the eastern bank of the Tigris, opposite the town of the modern Mosul. *Shall rise in judgment*. Shall stand forth before the tribunal of judgment. The expression refers to the standing forth of witnesses or accusers, to give their testimony against criminals on trial. *With this generation*, i. e. on the trial of this generation of men. We are not necessarily to suppose, that there will be a real confronting of the Jews by the Ninevites, at the day of judgment. Their well known reception of Jonah will stand forth, an example condemnatory of the hardness of heart and unbelief of the Jews in rejecting one, who gave such evidence that he was sent of God, as did Jesus Christ. *A greater than Jonas*, &c. Greater in dignity, and whose mission was attested by greater miracles. This was what enhanced the condemnation of the wicked Jews. It is to be noted that our Lord does not here refer to the sign of Jonah in the fish's belly, but to Jonah preaching to the repenting Ninevites. As he did this subsequent to his re-appearance from the *depths of Hades* (Jonah 2 : 2), so our Lord after his resurrection preached by his apostles, and yet both before and after that wondrous event, he was rejected by the unbelieving Jews, the very reverse of the conduct of the Ninevites at the preaching of Jonah. We are not told how many of the Ninevites repented.

'because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here.

42 <sup>m</sup> The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn

l Jon. 3 : 5.      m 1 Ki. 10 : 1, 2; ch. 9 : 1;  
Lu. 11 : 31.

Probably a large number, including the king and chief men. See Jonah 3 : 6-9.

42. In the same oriental style of expression, the queen of the south is represented, as appearing in judgment against the men of that generation. Reference is had to the queen of Sheba, who, attracted by the fame of Solomon, came from the remotest regions (*uttermost parts of the earth*) to hear his wisdom and behold his magnificence. Sheba was probably a city of Arabia Felix, and the name of this queen was Bekris or Balkis. Josephus (Antiq. 8, 6, 5) styles her the queen of Egypt and Ethiopia. The phrase, *uttermost parts of the earth*, is no objection to the location of the country in Arabia, as the imperfect geographical knowledge, and the tediousness and difficulty of intercommunication, rendered countries, now considered near at hand, comparatively remote and unknown. *Wisdom of Solomon*, here referring to his great knowledge and learning, as shown in 1 Kings 4 : 29-34. In this sense of general learning and science, *wisdom* is to be taken in Acts 7 : 22, and as exhibited in teaching, in Matt. 13 : 54. In the higher sense of wisdom, as revealed in the gospel of Christ, the word is to be taken in 11 : 19. *A greater than Solomon*, i. e. possessed of more wisdom and true greatness. In both this and the preceding verse, the neuter is used in the original, in the sense of *more than Jonas, more than Solomon*, referring not only to Jesus as the announcer of glad tidings, but to the gospel itself, the preacher and the subject being greatly superior to any thing which had ever yet appeared on earth.

43-45. Commentators unite in regarding this as a difficult passage, both

it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here.

43 <sup>n</sup> When the unclean spirit is

n Lu. 11 : 24.

in regard to its connection and subject. Some refer it to vs. 38-40, in this sense: that if a sign were given them so celestial and glorious as to compel their acknowledgment of his Messiahship, yet it would be but momentary, for the demon of unbelief would return and take possession of their heart. Others with more propriety, refer it to the whole of the preceding context, embracing both his calumniators (v. 24) and the sign-seekers (v. 38). This latter class of persons stood by and heard the blasphemous words uttered against the divine power of Christ, as displayed in his ejection of demons, and it seems forced and partial, to refer this simile of the unclean spirit to either of these sets of persons exclusive of the other. The whole transaction is to be taken into view, in order to clothe this remarkable simile with its appropriate appositeness and force. The Pharisees had brought a malignant charge against Christ, and having been silenced and put to shame by him, others of their number standing by, came to the rescue, and, in order to maintain appearances in the eyes of the people, with great apparent sincerity demanded a sign of his Messiahship. This he refuses to give them (vs. 39-42), and then proceeds to warn them of the doom which awaits their impiety and unbelief. Whether our Lord intends in this simile to speak of what actually occurs in demoniacal possessions, or whether the account is to be received as parabolical and ornamental in its minor circumstances, is more than we can tell. No one can disprove its being an actual occurrence, for it refers to a subject, of which we can have no knowledge except from revelation.

43. *Is gone out of a man*, i. e. is dis-

gone out of a man, ° he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he

o Job. 1 : 7; 1 Pe. 5 : 8.

possessed by a higher power, as the demon would not voluntarily leave the person possessed. *He walketh* (i. e. proceedeth) *through dry places*. According to the Jewish notion, the abode of these unclean spirits was in the air (Ephes. 2 : 2), and in dry and deserted places (Isa. 13 : 21, 22; 34 : 14). When cast forth from the man, he returns at once to his dwelling place, and there passes a restless, discontented existence (*seeking rest and finding none*), until an opportunity is afforded him of doing further mischief.

44. *Then he saith, &c.* He resolves to return once more to the man from whom he had been cast out, hoping in some way to effect an entrance. What a picture of the eagerness of these malignant beings to afflict man. *My house*. He speaks of the human body, as his own habitation, in which he has comparative happiness. *He findeth it empty, &c.* Every thing is ready for his reception. The imagery is taken from a house, all cleaned and decorated for the reception of some expected guest. This is expressed in the original by the perfect participles, *having been swept and garnished*, so as to be ready for the occupant. The cleanliness and emptiness of this habitation of the demon was, in reality, a state of high moral corruption and fullness of evil.

45. *Then goeth he, &c.* At sight of his old abode, all fitted up for his occupancy and use, in an ecstasy of demoniacal joy, he hastens to associate *with himself* (i. e. as companions) seven other spirits, of greater malignity and power to do mischief than himself. The word *seven* was often put by the Jews for an indefinite round number, and thus it is frequently used in the Scriptures. *More wicked than himself*, i. e.

findeth *it* empty, swept, and garnished.

45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there:

they had greater capacity and inclination for wickedness than the demon which had previously possessed the man. This shows on his part a malignant desire to render the man as miserable as possible. It shows also that there are grades of wickedness among bad spirits. Compare Eph. 6 : 12. *Enter in. Take possession of the man. And dwell there.* He becomes their fixed and permanent abode. Nothing short of omnipotent power can free him from this dreadful possession, and seldom is that exerted in behalf of an individual thus repossessed by the devil. *And the last state, &c.* It could not be otherwise, being, as he was, under the influence of this seven-fold Satanic possession. *Last state* (literally *last things*) comprises the whole condition and circumstances of the man's being. So *the first* designates his previous state, when possessed by only one demon. *Even so shall it be, &c.* The application is intended first, as we have shown, for the calumniators of Jesus, and sign-seekers who had just been tempting him (Luke 11 : 16). But this simile had a still wider range. The Jewish nation, which at previous times, especially in the Babylonish captivity, had been dispossessed of some of their national sins, especially the demon of idolatry, had gradually under the influence of Pharisaical teaching, sunk into the lowest depths of formality and hypocrisy. This was their state when Christ appeared on earth. Instead of reforming under his plain and searching ministry, they became worse and worse, until having filled up the measure of their iniquities, they were destroyed by the Romans. Their crimes and excesses, as related by Josephus, are scarcely equalled by those

<sup>r</sup> and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

46 ¶ While he yet talked to the people, <sup>r</sup> behold, *his* mother and <sup>r</sup> his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.

47 Then one said unto him, Be-

*p* He. 6: 4, & 10: 26; 2 Pe. 2: 20, 21, 22.  
*q* Ma. 8: 31; Lu. 8: 19, 20, 21.

of any nation, whose history has come down to us. Lessons of instruction may also be drawn from this passage, in reference to the increased wickedness, which generally marks the apostasy of those who, having professed religion, turn away from the truth to their former evil ways.

46-50. CHRIST'S DISCIPLES HIS TRUE RELATIVES. *Galilee.* Mark 3: 31—35; Luke 8: 19—21.

46. While our Lord was thus vehemently denouncing the Pharisees, his mother and brethren, fearing, as it would seem, lest he should expose his life to the rage of these wicked men, and, as we are informed in Mark 3: 21 (on which see Note), regarding him as in a measure beside himself, were desirous of withdrawing him from the scene of excitement and danger, or at least of addressing him with words of warning and caution (see Mark 3: 21), but were unable to reach him, on account of the thronging multitude. *His brethren.* Probably the sons of Joseph and Mary, although some think the word should be translated, *kinsmen*, as referring to the sons of Joseph by a former wife, or of Mary's sister the wife of Cleophas. *Without*, i. e. outside of the house where he was speaking, or outside of the crowd.

47-49. *Then one said.* The person doubtless whom his relations had sent (see Mark 3: 31), to inform Jesus of their wish to speak with him. *But he answered and said.* We may infer from this, that he refused at this time to see his friends, but continued his discourse. This was from no disrespect to his mo-

hold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and

*r* Ch. 13: 55; Ma. 6: 3; John 2: 12, & 7: 3, 5; Ac. 1: 14; 1 Co. 9: 5; Ga. 1: 19.

ther and relatives, but because he had other and higher duties pressing upon him, which would admit of no interruption. *Who is my mother, &c.* This question served to call attention to what he was going to say, respecting the relationship of believers to him. See N. on 11: 16. It strikes deep at the impious and superstitious honors given in these latter times to the mother of our Lord. The ties of spiritual consanguinity are declared to be so superior to those merely natural, that the one is lost in the contemplation of the other. *Who is my mother? what mother have I*, save those who have forsaken all and are following me, as faithful and loving disciples? *And he stretched forth his hand; literally, and having stretched forth his hand*, a pause doubtless following the gesture, in order to give emphasis to the words which followed. *Behold my mother, &c.* Here again no slight or disrespect was offered to his mother and other relatives by this spiritual relationship claimed with his true disciples. His intention was only to show, in this impressive manner, what constitutes true and lasting consanguinity. He meant also perhaps to rebuke gently any interference with the work, which his Father had given him to do. It was necessary at this time, that he should vindicate himself from the malicious charge of the Pharisees, and had he withdrawn and left them in the field, without boldly refuting their accusation and replying to their cavils, his disciples would have marked and remembered his timorous conduct, and a blow would have been



said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

50 For <sup>a</sup> whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

<sup>s</sup> See Jn. 15 : 14 ; Ga. 5 : 6, & 6 : 15 ; Col. 3 : 11 ; He. 2 : 11.

given his cause, from which it would hardly have recovered.

50. *For whosoever shall do, &c.* See N. on 7 : 21. This extends the spiritual consanguinity here spoken of to the whole body of believers, and shows also the principle, on which true discipleship is founded. To be a disciple, one must be not a hearer only, but a doer of the word. He is then brought into an union with Christ far more intimate and tender, than any earthly relationship. But this is not the result of an empty formal profession of his name, a mere outward observance of the claims of religion. *The same.* The original Greek has the force, *he* (and no other) *is my brother, &c.* In this enumeration of relationships, it has been noticed by commentators, that our Lord makes no reference to the *paternal* relation, as he had in reality no earthly father.

### CHAPTER XIII.

1-23. PARABLE OF THE SOWER. *Lake of Galilee, near Capernaum.* Mark 4 : 1-25 ; Luke 8 : 4-18. There is a close verbal resemblance here between the evangelists, yet a divergency sufficient to show that they were not copyists one from another. In the parable itself, Mark is the fullest, but in its interpretation by our Lord, Matthew introduces v. 12, and also the citation from Esaias (vs. 14-17) which are not found in Mark or Luke.

1. *The same day.* Although this expression is sometimes used indefinitely (see Acts 8 : 1), it is here to be taken literally for the same day, on which he had denounced the blasphemy of the Pharisees. It was a memorable day, and it appears from 8 : 24 (on which see N.), that he became so ex-

### CHAPTER XIII.

THE same day went Jesus out of the house, <sup>a</sup> and sat by the sea-side.

2 <sup>b</sup> And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so

<sup>a</sup> Ma. 4 : 1.    <sup>b</sup> Lu. 8 : 4.

hausted by its labors, that while crossing the lake, he fell into so deep a sleep, that the noise of the tempest and the confusion on board the ship, failed to awaken him. Luke supplies some intervening events, in 11 : 37-54 ; 12 : 1-59 ; 13 : 1-9. *Out of the house* in which he had healed the demoniac and denounced the Pharisees (see Mark 3 : 19). *And sat by the sea-side.* This place was selected, because it furnished a better position, from which to address the vast multitude which thronged around him. As it respects his sitting posture, see N. on 5 : 1.

2. *So that he went, &c.* In the process of his discourse, he was probably obliged to do this, in order to avoid interruption from the pressure of the eager multitude. See N. on 12 : 15. It was probably very near Capernaum, where he addressed this great multitude. *A ship* ; literally, *the ship*, referring to one which belonged to Jesus' disciples, or which had been placed at his service by some of his friends, at Capernaum. Alford thinks that the form of expression, *the house, the ship*, means nothing more definite than *a house*, as opposed to the open air ; *a ship*, as opposed to a position on shore. But the well-known laws of the Greek article are better observed here, in giving it the above-mentioned definite sense. *On the shore* ; literally, *the flat beach* over which the sea breaks. This shows that in their great desire to hear Jesus, they stood on the very margin of the lake. The scene must have been sublime and impressive. We love to linger on such incidents in our Savior's ministry. Seated in the ship, at a suitable distance from the shore, his chosen disciples around him, the hills in the rear forming the triangular plain, in the midst of

that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying,

c Lu. 5: 3.

which stood Capernaum, he addressed in words, such as man never spake, the great multitude, who pressed to the very brink of the water in order the better to hear him.

3. *He spake many things to them in parables*, i. e. he illustrated and enforced many points of his discourse by parables. The word *parable*, literally signifies, *a placing of things side by side*, and hence a *comparison* or *similitude*. In the New Testament usage, it is a short narration, serving by points of resemblance, to render the subject in hand more clear and striking, and to fix it more permanently in the mind of the hearer. A parable differs from a fable, in that it introduces acts which are possible and probable, while a fable introduces those that are impossible, as conversation between animals and even inanimate objects. A parable may be true or fictitious. We have no reason to doubt that our Savior's parables were all founded on facts, although if such were not the case, used as illustrations well understood by the people, they would be not in the least wrong or objectionable. In interpreting a parable, the exact sense of the words is to be first reached, as in any other form of narrative. The great point of the resemblance or similitude to the subject which it is designed to illustrate, should then be carefully sought for. The other incidents of the parable are to be regarded as the filling up, or the *background* of the moral picture, giving life, beauty, vivacity, naturalness to the narration. The losing sight of this has been a prolific source of error. Parables have been forced to teach almost every thing by attributing to their minor parts some profound allegorical signification. This is erroneous and attended with the most mischievous results. The parable teaches one great truth, which can be ascertained from the circumstances or occasion of its utterance, but the parts of which it is composed, must not be pressed to teach of necessity some

additional spiritual truth. But while a rigid adherence to this principle of parabolic interpretation is to be maintained, we are not forbidden to use these minor portions, as suggestive and illustrative of many points of duty and practice. In the parable of the prodigal son, the main point of illustration is the readiness of God to receive the repenting sinner, as he returns from his wanderings in the paths of sin, but the whole parable is full of profitable suggestions and tender appeals to the outcasts of sin and wretchedness.

There were many advantages attending this mode of instruction. Unwelcome truths could be advanced without exciting the prejudices of those to whom they were addressed. Men would be led to an admission of some offensive doctrine or tenet, and to its personal application to themselves, before they had time to array themselves against it. Reproof and warning found in it an appropriate vehicle to men's hearts. It brought great truths down to a level with the intellectual capacities of all. It addressed didactic instruction to the imagination, as well as to the reasoning faculties. It was a formula of moral truth, which the least retentive memory could carry away, to be pondered upon, in the daily walks of business, and in the hour of retirement.

The parables of our Savior are all pertinent and impressive. Some of the grandest truths of the gospel are taught in them. They have afforded instruction, warning, encouragement, consolation to God's children in every age of the Christian church, and thousands will attribute their conviction of sin, and their experience of Christ's pardoning love, to the arousing, convincing, and quickening power of truth, as illustrated and enforced in the parables of the lost sheep, the piece of silver, the prodigal son, the barren fig tree, and others of like nature.

*A sower*; literally, *the one who sows*, *the sower*, generically spoken (see N. on

<sup>d</sup> Behold, a sower went forth to sow;

4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up,

*d* Lu. 8: 5.

10: 16), as we say *the farmer*, referring to any one of the class. *Went forth* (into his field) *to sow*. As our Savior himself has interpreted this parable (vs. 18-23), little else than a verbal explanation is needed. It may be remarked in general, that the parable teaches the various states of mind with which gospel truth is received, and also the different degrees of apparent reformation to which many attain, and then fall away and perish. These three degrees are progressive, each higher and more permanent than the preceding, and yet all fall short of that radical change, denoted by the good seed falling on good ground.

4. *By the way side*; literally, *along* or *by the way*. The field either bordered upon a path or high-way; or such a path ran through it. Upon this path some of the seeds, as they fell from the hand of the sower, would of necessity fall, and not being harrowed or ploughed in, were at once picked up by the birds, which frequent such fields. *Fowls*. See N. on 6: 15. *Devoured them up*. The expression in the original is intensive. They completely swallowed them down. There was no chance whatever of their taking root and bringing forth fruit.

5, 6. *Stony places*; literally, *the stony places*. So below *the thorns*, *the good ground*, these being regarded as parts of the field, which embraced these different kinds of ground. By the expression *stony places* (literally, *rocky places*, the word being derived from *pctra*, a rock, and not from *petros*, a piece of rock, a stone), reference is had, not so much to ground abounding in small stones, as to large, flat rocks

because they had no deepness of earth:

6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

(Luke 8: 6), overlaid with a thin surface of earth, upon which the seed falls and is slightly covered up. In consequence of its having to make its way through so trifling a depth of earth, and the soil being kept warm by the radiation of heat from the rock, such seed springs up speedily, and for a short time gives promise of a vigorous growth. But having no depth of root, the heat of the sun scorches it, and causes it to become sickly and to wither away. *When the sun was up*, i. e. poured down its noon-tide heats. Rosenmuller refers it to the sun's dissipation of the clouds, which in November in seed time, overspread the sky. *Were scorched*, i. e. withered away through heat of the sun. *Withered away*. A better translation would be *dried* or *shrivelled up*, the result of too much heat with no depth of root. The plants having a forced and premature growth, first began to droop and wither under the intense solar rays, and soon became dry and without vegetable life. The words finely denote the process of decay and death.

7. *Some fell among thorns*. In almost every field are rough places, where the tillage is less thorough, and thorn-bushes spring up. The plough passes through them, and the ground being thus partially prepared, receives the seed, which in due time springs up. But the thorns also spring up, and having a more rapid growth, overshadow the tender blades, draw away their nourishment, give them no room to grow, and thus choke them. Every tiller of the ground will bear testimony to the truth to nature of this parable.

8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some 'an hundredfold, some sixty fold, some thirtyfold.

9 <sup>f</sup>Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

*e* Ge. 26 : 12. *f* Ch. 11 : 15; Ma. 4 : 9.

8. *Good ground*, i. e. good soil, free from rocks and thorn-bushes. *Some*; literally, *one*, i. e. one seed, representing the class of seeds which yielded so abundantly. So the word *some* in the next clause is literally, *another*, in the same collective sense. *An hundred-fold*, i. e. each seed yielded one hundred grains. This was a great, but not an unexampled increase (see Gen. 26 : 12). The terms *hundred*, *sixty*, *thirty fold* are used as round numbers to express the varieties of increase from a moderate to a most abundant harvest. In sowing a field of even ordinary cultivation, by far the greater number of seeds will fall upon good and productive soil. We are not to infer from this, that they who receive the truth in the love of it, preponderate in numbers over those upon whom the word produces no lasting effect. Would that it were so, but thus far in the history of the gospel, the very opposite is true.

9. *Who hath ears*, &c. See N. on 11 : 15.

10. *And the disciples came*. This took place at the close of the discourse. But the explanation and the reason for teaching in parables are here introduced, as though they preceded the parable of the tares, mustard seed, and others, which were pronounced on this occasion, while he sat in the ship. There was no interruption of the discourse, but when it was ended, and they were alone (Mark 4 : 10), the disciples proposed this inquiry. *Why speakest thou*, &c. If we except the barren fig tree (Luke 13 : 6-9), these are the first recorded parables of our Lord. On this occasion he pronounced seven. So new and unusual a style of address gave rise to the question here proposed.

11. *Because it is given unto you*, &c.

10 ¶ And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables ?

11 He answered and said unto them, Because <sup>g</sup>it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the

*g* Ch. 11 : 25, & 16 : 17; Ma. 4 : 11; 1 Co. 2 : 10; 1 Jo. 2 : 27.

The general sense of this reply is this : Such is the blindness and hardness of heart of these Jews, that unless the truths of the gospel are illustrated and enforced by these plain and familiar similitudes, they will remain blind and unaffected by what they hear. But to you, my disciples, whose minds are beginning to be enlightened to perceive the mysterious things of the kingdom of heaven, there is no necessity of employing other than plain language. Nothing is more erroneous than to suppose that Jesus used an obscure mode of speech, as a sort of judicial punishment of those whom he addressed. It is repugnant to the whole tenor of our Savior's ministry. His instructions were always given in the plainest manner, so that men of the most ordinary capacity could understand him. The very nature and design of parables forbid also this supposition, that they were intended as a means of judicial blindness. They are employed to illustrate, not to darken, a subject. They serve to bring abstruse truths down to the comprehension of the unlearned and feeble of intellect. They secure for unwelcome truths a lodgment in the mind. This was the ground and reason of their use on the present occasion. The people were so blinded and warped by prejudices, and a false religious education, that they were in a condition, in which the truth would have a blinding, hardening influence, unless commended to them, in the attractive garb of parables and similitudes. This view clothes the instructions of our Lord on this occasion, with their usual directness, and adaptation to the capacities of his hearers. The effect of his preaching, even with all its tenderness, plainness, and simplicity, was, doubtless, the hard-



kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

12 <sup>4</sup> For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have

& Ch. 25: 29; Ma. 4: 25; Lu. 8: 18, & 19: 26.

ening of many hearts, but this was not the *intended* effect, which was their conversion from impenitence and unbelief. It may be thought that Mark (4: 12) conflicts with this view, but the word there rendered *that*, has not the sense of the final cause *in order that*, but of the event or result, *so that, so as that* (see N. on 1: 22). So also the word rendered *lest* in Mark 4: 12, is to be translated in consonance with the same idea, *so as not*, a meaning, which Olshausen, although stoutly contending for the sense *in order that*, admits that it has in the New Testament. The result of the preaching of both Esaias and Christ, and not the designed effect, is most unquestionably taught in Mark, as well as here in Matthew.

*Is given*; literally, *has been given*. Reference is had to the previous plan and purpose of God in the dispensation of grace. *The mysteries*, i. e. the truths and principles of the gospel, shut up from the Jews, through their mistaken notions of the Messianic kingdom. This concealment was not effected by the direct agency of God, but by their own depraved and worldly views of the glory of the promised Messiah. Alford pertinently remarks, "the Kingdom of Heaven, like other kingdoms, has its secrets (Rom. 16: 25), and inner counsels, which strangers must not know, but are only revealed to the humble, diligent hearers." *Of the kingdom*, i. e. pertaining or relating to the kingdom.

12. *For whosoever hath*, &c. Those who receive the truth of the gospel, shall from time to time receive new light in regard to its mysteries, and clearer views of the Messiah's kingdom. Those, on the other hand, who have little spiritual knowledge, and who take no pains to increase it, but close their eyes and ears to the truth, shall become more and more darkened by sin and unbelief, until the little spiritual

more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

13 Therefore speak I to them

discernment they had, is totally lost. The language is proverbial, and is borrowed from worldly riches, which, in the hands of the prudent and industrious, increase, but when committed to the slothful and improvident, soon waste away. This verse contains the reason why plain language of instruction was addressed to his disciples, while to the ignorant and benighted masses, parables were spoken. The design was to arrest their attention, and bring them to the possession of the spiritual riches, which they were in danger of losing through the hardness and impiety of their hearts. It was not our Lord's design to take away the faint religious knowledge which they had, but to increase it. But so imminent was their danger of losing every religious impression, and relapsing into moral stupidity and blindness, that he deemed it necessary to administer truth to them in its most captivating and unobjectionable form, and therefore addressed them in parables. *That hath*, i. e. has made a proper use of the knowledge and privileges which he possesses. *Shall have abundance*; literally, *shall have in greater abundance*, or *more abundantly*. His former knowledge and power of spiritual discernment shall be greatly increased. *Hath not*, i. e. has made no use of his spiritual gifts and blessings, and is satisfied to grope in darkness. *Even that he hath*. He shall lose even the privileges which he possesses, and become utterly destitute of every means of religious light and attainment.

13. *Therefore*, because of their insensibility and blindness, which would lead them to reject truth plainly spoken. *Speak I to them in parables*, in a way which arrests their attention and obtains their assent, before their prejudice and impiety are fully aroused to opposition. *Because they seeing, see not*, i. e. while they have the highest ad-

in parables : because they seeing, see not ; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand.

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, ' By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand ; and seeing

† Is. 6 : 9 ; Ez. 12 : 2 ; Ma. 4 : 12 ; Lu. 8 : 10 ; Ju. 12 : 40 ; Ac. 28 : 26, 27 ; Ro. 11 : 8 ; 2 Co. 3 : 14, 15.

vantages for seeing, they are dull, stupid, and have no spiritual discernment of the truth. No method of instruction is so well adapted to such persons, as that conveyed in the way of parables. *Hearing, they hear not.* The preceding sentiment expressed in varied form. While such persons hear with the outward ear the gospel message, they are so dull of spiritual understanding, that it is to them as though they heard it not. All this shows their blind obstinacy and hardened wickedness, and furnishes the reason, why Jesus tried to reach their heart through the medium of parables.

14. *In them is fulfilled*, i. e. has, as it were, a second fulfillment. They were so like the people to whom Isaiah ministered, that there was another, and by as much as our Savior's ministration was of a higher order than that of this prophet, a higher fulfillment. *The prophecy of Esaias.* The quotation is from Isa. 6 : 9, 10, and conforms in sense, although not in verbal exactness to the original. *By hearing ye shall hear.* This is a Hebraism intending to give emphasis, and therefore is the very sense of the original, "hear ye indeed ;" literally, "hear ye ever so often." *And shall not understand.* This is the result. So in the original, "but understand not ;" literally, "ye will not understand." *Seeing, ye shall see.* In the original : "See ye ever so frequently." *Shall not perceive.* Original : "Perceive not ;" literally, "ye will not discern." Here the result is again given. It is not the aim or purpose of God, in sending forth his ministers, to harden men's hearts and darken their understanding,

ye shall see, and shall not perceive :

15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their ears* <sup>k</sup>are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed ; lest at any time they should see with *their eyes*,

k He. 5 : 11.

although it has oftentimes this sad effect.

15. *Is waxed gross*, i. e. has become dull and heavy. Physical obesity is here put for mental dulness, from the notion quite prevalent in all ages, that excess of fat tends to mental stupidity. There is here a slight departure from the original, which is, "make the heart of this people fat," i. e. declare God's message, the effect of which, in their present condition, will be to render them still more dull and insensible. In our Lord's quotation, this effect is brought out, it answering best the design of his citation, which was to show the exceeding wickedness and spiritual insensibility of the Jews. This verse thus becomes, as it was intended, explanatory and confirmatory of v. 14, viz. that the result of attempting to impart to them divine truth, had only been to render them more and more insensible to its saving influence. *And their ears are dull of hearing ;* literally, *they hear heavily with their ears* (i. e. indistinctly, as when dull and confused sounds strike upon the ear). According to the well known laws of Hebrew poetry, the preceding sentiment is here expressed in varied form. *Their eyes they have closed* in order not to see. In this third parallelism, the same idea is continued under varied imagery. The general sentiment is that they have become utterly insensible to divine truth, and hence the effect of any presentation of it, is to harden their heart, and fit them more certainly for destruction. This was the sad result of Isaiah's preaching, and also of our Savior's, in many instances, even though

and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

16 But *'blessed are your eyes,*

l Ch. 16 : 17 ; Lu. 10 : 23, 24 ; Ju. 20 : 29.

he spoke to them in parables and similitudes. The words, *their eyes they have closed*, show that the act was their own, and for it they were, therefore, blameworthy. By a course of wrong doing, men very often render themselves incapable of understanding and appreciating the spiritual truths of the gospel. This blindness may be fatal, but resulting as it does, from their own perverseness, furnishes no excuse for their not coming to the light. *Lest*. See N. on v. 11. This word does not here denote design, but the result of the dulness just spoken of. The sense is, *so that they will not see*, &c. In the quotation of this passage by John (12 : 40), the Greek word for *so that*, is employed in the place of the one here rendered *lest*, which shows that the *eventual* signification is the correct one. The original in Isaiah has the same sense, according to the best interpreters. *Should understand*, &c. This is placed in opposition to the fatness or dulness of heart, charged upon them in the former part of the verse. *Should be converted* ; literally, *should turn unto God*. This is the invariable result of the clearing or purifying of the spiritual senses, as denoted in the preceding clauses. As soon as light begins to break in upon the soul, it turns to God, that "in His light it may see light."

Such appears to be the sense of this very difficult portion of Scripture. It will be seen that a different view of the design of our Savior's parables, will, of necessity, lead to a different interpretation of the quotation from Isaiah. They who think that our Lord, in the words of Doddridge, "in just displeasure preached to them in this obscure language, that what was their crime might be their punishment ;" or with Ol-

for they see : and your ears, for they hear.

17 For verily I say unto you, <sup>m</sup>That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see

m He. 11 : 13 ; 1 Pe. 1 : 10, 11.

shausen, suppose that "their failing to understand him, was the object designed by our Lord in using the language of parables ;" or with Alford, that his purpose in thus speaking was the quality possessed by them (i. e. the parables) "of hiding their meaning from the hard-hearted and sensual," will view the whole narration and the citation from Isaiah in a quite different light from those, who think that Jesus adopted this mode of instruction, in condescension to their spiritual blindness and deep-rooted prejudices, which rendered them insensible and averse to truths plainly spoken. But this latter view has certainly this advantage, that it assigns to these parables an enlightening service, the true end of parabolic instruction, and magnifies the compassionate mercy of Jesus in resorting to this means to bring the multitude, sunk in the depths of sin and moral insensibility, to open their hearts to the reception of truth.

16. *Blessed are your eyes*, &c. In contrast with the deplorable condition of the Jews through spiritual blindness, Christ pronounces his disciples happy, in that they were permitted to see and understand the great truths of the gospel, which he was then unfolding to them.

17. The age too in which they lived, in the very time of the Messiah's advent, so long and anxiously expected by the greatest and most pious of the Jewish nation, rendered them fit subjects of congratulation. *Many prophets and righteous men*, &c. A general expectation of the Messiah pervaded the Jewish nation, attended with the strongest desire for his speedy appearance. Especially was this true of the prophets (1 Pet. 10-12) and eminent saints. They looked to his advent, as

*those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

18 ¶ "Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

19 When any one heareth the

n Ma. 4 : 14 ; Lu. 8 : 11.

the consummation of all their hopes for the renovation and elevation of the Jewish commonwealth. Many of them, like Simeon (Luke 2 : 29) would have declared their readiness to leave this world for another, could their eyes have once beheld Him, who was their hope and expectation as the King and Deliverer of Israel. See John 8 : 56 ; Heb. 11 : 13. *Righteous men* but not endowed with the spirit of prophecy. Luke has "kings," i. e. such righteous kings as David, Hezekiah, Josiah, &c.

18. *Hear ye therefore the parable*, i. e. attend to its explanation. Olshausen, however, denies that this should be translated *hear the exposition of the parable*; and yet but a few lines previous he remarks, that this is one of the few parables, of which we possess an authoritative explanation by the Lord.

19. *Heareth the word*, as preached by Christ and his apostles and ministers. This was the seed sown (Luke 8 : 11). *The kingdom* of grace established by the Messiah. *Understandeth it not*, through carelessness and inattention. The effect is here put for the cause. The hardness and insensibility of the heart is well represented by a hard-trodden way side, on which the seed falls with no impression. These careless, insensible hearers of God's word constitute the great majority of those who sit under the gospel. The faint impressions made upon them by the word, pass away and are lost through the agency of Satan, who is ever at hand to catch away that which is sown in the heart. Compare 32 : 5 ; 2 Cor. 4 : 4. *Then cometh*. The devil, although always at hand to frustrate the designs of grace, is said to *come*, in order to keep up the similitude between him and the birds of the

word ° of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

20 But he that received the

o Ch. 4 : 23.

parable, which were said to come, as soon as the sower had passed along, and snatch up the seeds which fell from his hand. *The wicked one*; literally, *the wicked*, put by way of emphasis for Satan (Mark 4 : 15), who acts not only himself, but through the agency of inferior demons. Had we not received this explanation from our Lord himself, it is doubtful, as Olshausen remarks, whether we should not have interpreted these birds, as designating injurious influences of one kind and another, instead of the adversary himself. But Satan works by a great variety of instrumentalities, and adverse influences to the reception of the truth, are all parts of his great machinery to ruin souls. *In his heart*, as the seat of the affections, emotions, passions. Some, however, refer it here to the mind, the seat of the intellect. *This is he which received seed by the way side*; literally, *was sown on the way side*. A strongly expressed metaphor, by which the man is said to be sown along the way side, in the sense of having received the word in his heart, like seed cast upon the hard-beaten path. In the same way, we speak of a field as having been sown, after it has received the seed.

20. *But he that received the seed*. Here also, *he that was sown*. See preceding Note. *In stony places*. See Note on v. 5. *The same is he that heareth*; literally, *this is one who heareth*. *Anon*, i. e. immediately, forthwith. *With joy receiveth it*. This is an advance upon the way side hearers, who heard the word, but understood it not. These receive it with joy. It proffers to them salvation. It speaks of peace, happiness, and endless life. Religion assumes for the time a lovely aspect. In



seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon <sup>p</sup> with joy receiveth it ;

21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while : for when tribulation or persecution

*p* Is. 58 : 2 ; Ez. 33 : 31, 32 ; Ju. 5 : 35.  
*q* Ch. 11 : 6 ; 2 Ti. 1 : 15.

a kind of joyous transport, but with little thought or reflection, they became her followers. Like the seed falling upon the shallow soil overspreading the rock, they start forth upon their religious career, far in advance of their more reflecting companions, and for a time manifest a zeal, which to those inexperienced in such cases, appears to be genuine and abiding.

21. *Yet hath he not root in himself*, i. e. in his own nature or spiritual being. The word is not deeply rooted in his heart. Its effect is emotional, transient, evanescent. *But dureth for a while* ; literally, *is a temporary* (disciple), "the creature of circumstances." Alford. *For when tribulation*, &c. In the early ages of the church and in subsequent times of persecution, the trials here mentioned constituted the touchstone of true faith in Christ. Every age however has its peculiar tests, by which the true character of stony-ground hearers is soon ascertained. *Tribulation* ; literally, *pressure or compression*, and referring in this place to the evils, by which men are pressed and straitened, and which test their faith, patience, and perseverance. Reference is had to private calamities and misfortunes, just as *persecution* refers to those of a more public nature. *Because of the word*, i. e. the gospel in which they have professed a belief. *By and by*. The same word, translated *anon* or *immediately*, in the preceding verse. The apostacy of these stony-ground hearers, was as sudden as their professed conversion. *He is offended* ; literally, *caused* (by these trials and persecutions) *to stumble*, i. e. to fall away from the truth. See Luke 8 : 13.

22. *He also that received seed*. See N. on v. 19. *Among the thorns*. See N.

ariseth because of the word, by and by <sup>r</sup> he is offended.

22 <sup>r</sup> He also that received seed <sup>s</sup> among the thorns is he that heareth the word ; and the care of

*r* Ch. 19 23 ; Ma. 10 : 23 ; Lu. 18 : 24 ; 1 Ti. 6 : 9 ;  
*s* 2 Ti. 4 : 10. *s* Je. 4 : 3.

on v. 7. *Is he that heareth the word* ; literally, *this is one who heareth*, &c. The class here represented, embrace the gospel, with more thought and reflection than the stony-ground hearers, and endure for a longer season. Many of them maintain a fair outward profession during their whole life. The soil is good, the seed is well received, but the plants are choked and rendered unfruitful, by the rank growth of thorns which springs up with them. The persons here referred to are immersed in worldly pursuits. Mammon is their god. The claims of business exhaust their time and energies. The pleasures of life also exert a powerful and pernicious influence. They become worldly-minded and unfruitful. The cause of Christ gains nothing by their professed discipleship, and they are found at last to have been wholly destitute of genuine piety. *The care of this world*, i. e. worldly cares and anxieties which distract the mind. *Deceitfulness of riches*. Riches deceive the soul by the fictitious happiness which they afford, and by causing the duties of religion to be deferred, until a sufficiency of wealth gives ample time to attend to them. Mark (4 : 19) adds to the delusion of riches, "the lust of other things," which is what Luke in the parallel passage (8 : 14) denotes "pleasures of this life." The pursuit of wealth or pleasure is alike baneful to the interest of the soul. In respect to these classes of hearers, it should be noticed, that while there is an apparent gradation for the better, from the careless, insensible way-side hearers, to the stony-ground hearers who joyfully received the word, and gave promise in the outset of much fruit, and then to those in whose heart the seed took deep root, but unhappily

this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth

among thorns which choked the word and rendered it unfruitful. Yet the real progress is downward, the condition of each class being worse than the preceding.

23. *Into good ground*, i. e. good soil, free from weeds and thorns, and not underlaid by rocks. The class here represented are true and genuine converts. It is not implied that the soil of their hearts was good by nature, but only as it was made so by the grace of God. The parable does not turn aside, to guard against misconstructions and perversions of truth. The word of God abundantly shows that the heart is desperately wicked, and not at all inclined of itself to receive divine truth in the spirit of love and obedience. Nor is it here taught that this was the first sowing of their heart. They may have belonged previously to the way-side, stony-ground, or thorn-bearing hearers, one or all of them at different times, but now their heart is inclined, by the sovereign grace of God, to receive the gospel message in penitence, faith, and love. Nor is their own active agency in this to be overlooked. They reason, choose, determine, obey. All the activities of their mind are in motion. But the parable brings simply and solely to view, the fit condition of their heart, at the time of the sowing, to receive the truth, and the good results of this reception of it. *Understandeth it*, i. e. comprehends the truth in all its bearings and realities. *Which also beareth fruit*. The true and only criterion of Christian character is found in the fruits of piety (see 7 : 16, 20). In Luke (8 : 15) it is thus expressed, "bringeth forth fruit with patience," i. e. with a patient endurance and perseverance under those trials, which caused the stony-ground hearers to fall away. *Some an hundredfold*, &c. This

*it*; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty.

24 ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto

denotes the different degrees of fidelity and activity in the Christian life. No reference is made to the different talents and capacities which man have, as in the parable of the talents (25 : 14-30), for there the improvement or increase was the same. But here the soil (i. e. the capacities and privileges) were the same, but the yield or increase varied. All these points are to be carefully noted, in studying and comparing the parables. Truth is presented by our Lord in a great variety of forms, and each parable has some new phase of doctrine or duty to illustrate and enforce.

24-53. PARABLE OF THE TARES, &c. *Near Capernaum*. Mark 4 : 26-34.

24. *Another parable*, &c. As a sort of application to his explanation of the parable of the sower, our Lord urges upon his disciples (see Mark 4 : 21-25; Luke 8 : 16-18) the duty of communicating faithfully to others, the truths which they are receiving from him. Then follows this parable of the tares, which is found only in Matthew's gospel. *Put he forth*, i. e. propounded, delivered. *Kingdom of heaven* refers here to the visible church on earth. This parable illustrates the variety of characters good and bad, which through the preaching of the word, are introduced into the church, and the final separation which will take place at the day of judgment. *Is likened unto a man*, i. e. to the circumstances detailed of a man. The comparison, a similar form of which is found in 18 : 23, is compendious and elliptical. *Good seed*, i. e. of good quality. *In his field*, i. e. a field for tillage, as lands in Palestine were not divided into enclosed fields, as in our country. Olshausen interprets this: *which in his field* (as the place of his labor) *sowed good seed*. But an accurate translation of the original, as

a man which sowed good seed in his field :

25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

well as a reference to vs. 27, 31, gives the sense: *which sowed his field with good seed*, the preposition of rest following the verb of motion, according to the grammatical principle laid down in N. on 3 : 6.

25. *But while men slept.* This seems to refer to the nap at noon, which the orientals were fond of taking, on account of the oppressive heat of their climate. See 2 Sam. 4 : 5 ; 11 : 2. We are not from this to charge necessarily upon those, under whose ministry spiritual tares are sown, negligence or sloth. Oftentimes the devil performs this work in the midst of the most incessant and watchful labors of Christ's ministers. This circumstance is added to render the parable natural and complete, inasmuch as the hour of sleep, would be the time, when a wicked and revengeful man would do the mischief here spoken of. Olshausen, Alford, and others consider the *night time* as simply designated. But whether it refers to sleep at night, or the usual nap at noon, no negligence is charged upon the servants, as they were only taking their accustomed rest. *Men*; literally, *the men* generically spoken. See N. on 10 : 16. *His enemy*, i. e. the enemy of the man to whom the field belonged. *Came into the field.* *Tares*, i. e. darnel, which at first closely resembles the blades of wheat. It was called by the Rabbins, *bastard wheat*. So deleterious was it to the wheat, that Virgil calls it, *infelix lolium, the unhappy darnel.* *Among the wheat*; literally *in the midst of the wheat*, not on the borders of the field, but in the very central and most highly cultivated portions. *Went his*

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he said, Nay; lest while

*way*, i. e. departed from the field without detection.

26. *But when the blade, &c.* It was not until the ears of grain began to appear, that the tares were distinguished. Our Savior here again illustrates the principle, that his followers are to be known by their fruits.

27. *Servants*; literally *slaves*, but here used in a secondary sense to denote persons in voluntary service. *Householder*; translated in 10 : 25, *master of the house.* *Sir*; literally *lord, master*, an honorary title of address. *Didst thou not sow, &c.* Their surprise at the appearance of the tares, is denoted by this question. *Whence then hath it tares?* It was inexplicable to them. They knew that they had sown pure seed-grain, and the cause of this growth of tares was beyond their comprehension. So the ministers of Christ are oftentimes amazed at the springing up of error in the midst of a faithful inculcation of the pure word of life.

28. *An enemy hath done this.* Such acts of malice are spoken of by writers, as not unknown in Oriental countries; and Alford cites an example in his own case, a field of his in Leicestershire, being maliciously sown with charlock over the wheat. *The servants said, &c.* The interest which these servants took in their master's property, is worthy of imitation by all from whom service to their superiors is due. *And gather them up, i. e. pull them up*, as appears from the injury to which this process of extirpation would expose the wheat.

29. *Lest while ye gather, &c.* The tares were injurious to the wheat, but not so much so, as the loosening of the

ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the

t Ch. 3: 12.

roots occasioned by pulling up the tares. Here were two evils, one of which was to be endured for a season, lest the other and greater should take place. This was the decision of the householder, who in this similitude represents Jesus Christ. This principle that the least of two evils is to be preferred (not for its own sake, but relatively), is in accordance with the teachings of Christ, as well as with common sense, and is of frequent application in reforming the abuses of society. The hot-headed and intemperate zeal of some, would lead them to the immediate eradication of social evils, without any thought as to the consequences. But a wise reformer will always consider well the effect of every measure upon the prosperity and perpetuity of organizations, that are to be left untouched, as essential to the well being of the community.

30. *Let both grow together, &c.* The tares were to remain undisturbed. They were suffered to grow side by side with the precious wheat. They drank the same moisture from the earth, were ripened by the same rays of the sun, but only to be prepared for burning at the time of harvest. So graceless professors enjoy the same ordinances of the gospel, receive the same religious instruction from a faithful ministry, have the same Bible, sit around the same table of communion, and yet are only fitted thereby for a more terrible condemnation. *Until the harvest.* On the 16th day from the first new moon in April, the first handful of ripe barley was carried to the altar, and then commenced the harvest. The barley was first gathered, and then the wheat and other grains. The time of the harvest, which continued from

tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but 'gather the wheat into my barn.

31 ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like to a

u Is. 2: 2,3; Mi. 4: 1; Ma. 4: 30; Lu. 13: 18, 19.

the passover until Pentecost, *seven weeks*, was almost one continual festival. The rich harvest was gathered with songs and other rejoicings, and all were cheerful and happy. *Reapers.* The sickle was commonly used in gathering in the Hebrew harvest. *Gather ye together, &c.* As the reapers passed through the fields, the tares were first to be gathered out and bound in bundles, in order to be carried off to be burned. Then the wheat was to be gathered into the barn. The explanation of this parable by our Lord (vs. 37-43), renders it unnecessary here to revert to the spiritual lesson which it teaches. Augustine explains the gathering of the tares into bundles, that the wicked will be separated into classes and punished, "rapacious with rapacious, adulterers with adulterers, murderers with murderers, thieves with thieves," &c. But this presses the figurative language too far, which is based simply on the manner in which the products of a field are removed, and is not intended to teach any thing farther, than the simple separation of the tares from the wheat.

31. *Another parable, &c.* Mark (4: 30) introduces this parable by a question on the part of Christ, as to what he should liken the kingdom of God, a somewhat common method, by which he drew attention to what he was about to say. See N. on 11: 16. *The kingdom of heaven*, i. e. the growth and progress of the visible church on earth, including perhaps the idea of the growth and enlargement of piety in the soul of the believer. *A grain of mustard seed*, a proverbial expression for any thing very small. The smallness and comparative insignificance is rendered still more prominent, from the



grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field :

32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds : but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

α Lu. 13 : 20.

fact, that it was a single grain of this seed, that is here spoken of. *Sowed.* Here used of a single seed in the sense of *planted.*

32. *Least of all* (literally, *less than all*) seeds is here opposed to *greatest of all* (literally *greater than all*) herbs in the next clause. Here lies the point of the parable, by which is represented the wide propagation and spread of the gospel from a very small beginning. *Herbs*, garden plants, vegetables. *Becometh* (as it were) *a tree*, &c. This plant grew in Palestine to a much larger size than with us. Irby and Mangles found it "growing wild, as high as the horse's head. Some think that a shrub or small tree is meant, whose fruit hanging in clusters resembles a currant, and has the taste of mustard. The above named travellers found this fruit near the Dead Sea. *So that* denotes the result of the size, to which the plant grows. *Lodge in the branches thereof*, i. e. make it a resting place and shelter from the heat of the sun. All this is the drapery, so to speak, of the parable, and should not be pressed to any service, except that for which it was designed, to make more natural and prominent the similitude. It were almost needless to say, how the truth taught in this parable was verified in the history of the infant church, which from the smallest and most humble beginning, increased and spread to such an extent, that even in the apostolic age, the whole civilized world felt and owned its power.

33. *The kingdom of heaven*, here refers to the changing, renewing, pervading influence, which the gospel exerts upon the whole spiritual man, or

33 ¶ <sup>2</sup> Another parable spake he unto them ; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

34 <sup>2</sup> All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables ;

γ Ma. 4 : 33, 34.

the nature and transforming power of religion in the soul. Like the preceding parable, a general reference is doubtless had also, to the external enlargement and spread of the kingdom of Christ. It is well said by Alford, that the parable of the grain of mustard seed had reference to the developing power of the kingdom of Christ, this parable, to the power which it possesses of penetrating and assimilating a foreign mass, till all be taken up into it. *Leaven.* The assimilating influence which leaven or sour dough, exerts upon every particle of the mass with which it is mixed, is too well known to need description. Here lies the point of the parable. Grace in the heart transforms to its own likeness the whole spiritual man. So will all the nations of the earth, by the pervading and transforming spirit of the gospel, become the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and have no other God but Jehovah. *Hid.* When mixed with the meal in the form of dough, it was concealed from the eye, but yet its all-pervading, transmuting influence was actively at work. *Three measures.* A measure contained about a peck and a half. Hence three measures would be something more than a bushel. Neither the capacity or number of the measures is essential to the parable. All such definiteness of description is simply intended to render the similitude more natural and striking.

34. *All these things*, i. e. all these truths of the gospel. *Without a parable*, &c. This does not mean that in preaching to the multitude on this occasion, he absolutely uttered nothing but parables. It rather denotes his

and without a parable spake he not unto them :

35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, "I will open my mouth in parables; "I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

35 Then Jesus sent the multi-

*ε* Ps. 78 : 2. *a* Ro. 16 : 25, 26; 1 Co. 2 : 7; Ep. 3 : 9; Col. 1 : 26.

frequent use of these similitudes to enforce and illustrate truths, which, in plain language would have been unwelcome and obscure to them. This view is confirmed by the use of the imperfect in the original Greek, which would be more correctly translated *was accustomed to speak*.

35. *That it might be, &c.* See N. on 1 : 22. *Spoken by the prophet* (Ps. 78 : 2). The Psalms are classed with the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. The Psalm here referred to is ascribed to Asaph. It had a fulfillment, in the similarity of Asaph's teaching by parables and dark sayings, to the mode of instruction adopted by Christ. *I will open my mouth.* See N. on 5 : 2. *In parables.* Both here and in 15 : 15, this word is to be taken in the more general sense of *dark sayings, or apothegms* of obscure and deep meaning. *I will utter; literally, will pour forth,* referring to a full, flowing, and earnest mode of address. *Things which have been kept secret; literally, things hidden or concealed,* spoken of truths previously unknown. *From the foundation of the world, i. e. from the beginning of the world, from the first creation of man.* The expression refers to the common notion in ancient times, that the world was an immense plane surface, resting on a solid foundation. An objection has been made that the psalm of Asaph here referred to, contains no parable. But the whole psalm is a parable or similitude, in which the story of God's mercy and judgment, displayed in leading Israel from Egypt into the promised land, and in rejecting

tude away, and went into the house : and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

37 He answered, and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man ;

38 <sup>b</sup> The field is the world ; the

*δ* Ch. 24 : 14, & 28 : 19; Ma. 16 : 15, 20; Lu. 24 : 47; Ro. 10 : 18; Col. 1 : 6.

Ephraim for Judah and Mount Zion, and choosing David "to feed Jacob his people and Israel his inheritance," is a prophetic type of the rejection of the Jews, and the gathering in of the Gentiles under the Son of David, the Messiah. Compare 1 Cor. 1 : 6, 11.

36. *Sent the multitude away* to their respective homes. *Went into the house* referred to in v. 1, on which see Note. *His disciples came, &c.* See N. on v. 10. *Declare* (i. e. explain) *unto us.* Mark (4 : 34) says that when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

37-42. There is, perhaps, no parable of the New Testament in which the circumstances are all so full of meaning, and so clearly explained, as the parable of the tares, and our Lord's exposition of it may be taken as a model key, by which we may unlock the meaning of those which he has left unexplained. With such an exposition as we have before us, comment upon the parable hardly seems necessary. Yet a few verbal explanations may be of some use.

37, 38. *He that soweth, &c.* Christ was himself a preacher of the truth, and, as the householder sowed his field through the agency of his servants, so our Lord also preaches through his ministers, who in every age have faithfully dispensed the word of life. *The field is the world.* The gospel has been provided for man. Wherever human beings are to be found on the face of the earth, there the glad news of salvation is to be proclaimed. No nation or people are to be passed by. In the

good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are <sup>c</sup> the children of the wicked one;

<sup>c</sup> Ge. 3: 13; Jn. 8: 44; Ac. 13: 10; 1 Jo. 3: 8.

hearing of all it is to be proclaimed: "Come, for all things are now ready." How slow have been God's people to acknowledge and act upon the great truth, that the whole world is the field, committed to them for tillage by their Lord and Savior. In some of its aspects, *the field* seems here to be put for the church, co-existent and, in its future triumph, co-extensive with the world, and hence represented by *the world*. The tares, while there is nothing to forbid their application to sinners in general, yet seem to find their true and most appropriate archetype in false professors, who enjoy the same spiritual nurture and genial influence, which mature and ripen the plants of grace, and yet have no spiritual life, and bring forth no fruit of holiness. The parable is evidently intended to take a wide scope, and may refer to the world into which sin came through Satanic agency, and was thus super-sown upon the work, which God himself pronounced to be very good, and in which is the church, as Augustine calls it, *triticum inter zizania, the wheat among tares*; or to the church itself embosoming hypocrites and deceived souls, rendered such by the agency of the devil. *The good seed are the children, &c.* Literally, *as to the good seed, these are the children, &c.* The seed is here put for those in whose hearts it was sown, and the phrase, *children of the kingdom*, refers to the true subjects or citizens of the Messiah's kingdom. Opposed to these are the tares, representing the *children of the wicked one*, the subjects and vassals of Satan. These two classes are found in the world, and even in the church itself, enjoying the same privileges, and walking apparently in the same path, but reserved for ends, as diverse as are their character and parentage.

39. *The enemy.* "An enemy hath done this," v. 28. Such injury could

39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; <sup>d</sup> the harvest is the

<sup>d</sup> Joel 3: 13; Re. 14: 15.

only proceed from enmity of the worst kind. Satan is the enemy of all good. Every influence which he exerts upon man, emanates from malignant hostility to God and his creatures. *The harvest is the end, &c.* The similitude between gathering in a harvest, which for months has been growing and ripening for the sickle, and assembling mankind at the day of judgment, is obvious and appropriate. The *end of the world* here denotes the second coming of Christ to judgment, although sometimes it is used to denote the end of the Jewish dispensation (see Heb. 9: 26: 1 Cor. 10: 11), or the consummation and change of things attendant upon the coming of the Messiah. The word translated *world*, literally signifies, *duration of time, a great cycle of time, an age or period of the world, a present age or dispensation*. Hence the phrase *end of the world* comes to signify *the end of the present system of things* (i. e. the world), or *the end of the present economy*, as the Mosaic institutions, the Jewish economy. So the phrase *world to come*, may refer specially to the Messianic reign as succeeding the Mosaic dispensation, or generally to the endless duration, which is to follow the closing up of this world's history at the day of judgment. Although this parable in its general application, looks forward to the *end of the world* at the day of judgment, yet it properly has reference only to the end of the present terrestrial life of man. But the phrase, *end of the world*, is selected for the obvious reason, that public judgment will then be pronounced, according to the characters formed in life. The life-time of the world, so to speak, will then come to an end. Its great harvest will be gathered in, consisting of the good and bad in every age from the beginning to the end of time. In like manner our Lord speaks of his sudden coming to judgment, in reference to which all are to be ready

end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall

*e* Ch. 18: 7; 2 Pe. 2: 1, 2. *f* Ch. 3: 12; Re. 19: 20, & 20: 10.

(24: 44), and yet this in its special personal application to man, can only be referred to his summons at the hour of death. This twofold reference is continually kept up in those great predictions, in which, besides, the great and final coming of our Lord, a subordinate coming at the hour of death, or to execute sudden and dreadful judgments at the destruction of Jerusalem, is also referred to. *The reapers are the angels.* See vs. 41, 49, where the ministry of angels at the day of judgment, is more particularly referred to. See also 25: 31; Mark 8: 38; 2 Thess. 1: 7, also Rev. 14: 19, where a reference is had to the angelic agency in the events of that great day.

40. This verse declares the similitude between the gathering together and burning of the tares, and the doom of the wicked at the day of final account. *In the end of this world.* The presence of the word *this*, has led some to think that reference is principally had to the end of the Jewish age or economy. But it applies equally well to the more extended age or constitution of things, to be closed up at the day of final judgment, and this sense is obviously demanded here.

41. This and the following verse are illustrative of the similitude spoken of in v. 40. *His angels.* Although of so humble a condition, Jesus does not hesitate to speak of himself as the Lord of angels, thus referring to his higher divine nature, which at the day of judgment will be fully manifested. *All things that offend;* literally, *all the stumbling-blocks*, which are causes of offence and falling away from the truth.

Vol. I.—8.

gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

42 *f* And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: *g* there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43 *h* Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the king-

*g* Ch. 8: 12; ver. 50. *h* Da. 12: 3; 1 Co. 15: 42, 43, 58.

The word is manifestly used here of persons, who are the stumbling-blocks of God's kingdom, although Steir understands it also of things, such as doctrines, opinions, practices, organizations, and the like. In the next clause, *and* is not connective but explanatory; *even them which do iniquity.* False teachers are eminently to be regarded as stumbling-blocks, and indeed all are to be included in the term, who by word or example cause others to go astray.

42. *And shall cast them, &c.* This shows that persons are referred to in the preceding verse. There is evident allusion here to the punishment of burning alive. See Dan. 3: 10. We are not to suppose that the place of punishment in the eternal world, is a literal *furnace of fire.* But what must the reality be, when such terrific imagery is employed by our Savior to express its dreadful nature. *A furnace;* (literally, *the furnace.* See N. on 8: 12). The word properly refers to ovens or furnaces, used for smelting metals, burning pottery, baking, and the like, where intense heat was required. *There shall be wailing, &c.* See N. on 8: 12, especially on the use of the article, which is found also here. These words denote the effect of their dreadful punishment. Wailings of anguish, and gnashing of teeth through pain and despair, will ever attest their unutterable woe. No words could more forcibly depict the unfathomable depths of their suffering, than those in this verse.

43. *Then shall the righteous shine forth, &c.* How peaceful and beautiful is this picture of the ineffable bliss of



dom of their Father. 'Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

44 ¶ Again, The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy

z Ver. 9.

the righteous, thus placed in contrast with the agony and despair of lost souls. *As the sun.* The comparison is exceedingly beautiful and expressive. As the sun shines out from a cloud, which for a time has concealed its rays, so the righteous, humble and obscure as may have been their previous condition, shall then shine forth in the likeness of Christ, and become partakers of his glory. *In the kingdom of their Father,* i. e. in heaven, the seat and centre of God's kingdom. *Who hath ears, &c.* A most timely caution, at the close of such an announcement, respecting the future condition of the righteous and the wicked. See N. on 11 : 15.

44. It is probable that our Lord spoke this and the following parables to the disciples, who had gathered around him, to listen to the explanation of the parable of the tares. *The kingdom of heaven* refers here to the necessity of a personal possession of the blessings of the Messianic kingdom. It would seem that a treasure found upon any land belonged to the owner of the land. Before the man spoken of here as having found a treasure, could legally possess it, he was obliged to become the owner of the field. His finding the treasure would have been of no service to him, unless he took the precautionary step to purchase the soil. Thus the blessings of the gospel can be obtained only by taking the requisite steps to secure them, or in other words, by repentance and faith in Christ. *Hid in a field.* In troublous times, or on an expected invasion of the enemy, treasures were often buried for safe keeping in the earth. If the person thus secreting his wealth should be slain or led into captivity, the treasure would for ever remain concealed, unless accidentally found by some one passing over,

thereof goeth and <sup>k</sup> selleth all that he hath, and <sup>l</sup> buyeth that field.

45 ¶ Again, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls :

46 Who, when he had found

k Phi. 3 : 7, 8. l Is. 55 : 1; Re. 3 : 18.

or at work upon the field. *He hideth* by covering it up again as it was before. Some think that it only means, that he concealed his good fortune. *Thereof,* i. e. on account of the treasure thus found. *Selleth all that he hath,* if necessary, to the purchase of the field. This shows his anxious determination to possess, at any cost or sacrifice, the field with its treasure. Here lies the point of this beautiful and instructive parable. It must not be understood that our Lord in this parable approved of the deception, or rather downright dishonesty, of this man. He only uses as an illustration a thing of common occurrence, without pronouncing at all upon its character, which all must acknowledge to have been wrong. Olshausen classes this with the parable of the Unjust Steward, and refers it to the commendation of prudence in regard to divine things. But this does not remove the difficulty.

45. The general sentiment of this parable is like that of the preceding one, with perhaps the additional idea of the inestimable value of the gospel, and the great gain which results to those who earnestly seek for the highest good in vital, spiritual godliness. *A merchantman.* One who travels from place to place, trafficking in pearls, jewels, and other valuables. Such itinerant merchants were common in the East, and from them wares were purchased, and sold at retail. *Seeking goodly pearls* in order to carry them to some city or country, where they would command a greater price. It is hardly necessary to say that pearls rank in value next to the diamond, and like that stone, are valuable in proportion to their purity and size.

46. *One pearl of great price.* The pearl thus unexpectedly found is of

"one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

47 ¶ Again, the kingdom of

*m Pr. 2 : 4, & 3 ; 14 : 15, & 8 : 10, 19.*

such value, as to render his fortune certain, if he can only obtain possession of it. Accordingly he goes away, and, like the man who had found the hidden treasure, sells all that he hath, and purchases the pearl. Thus the pearl of salvation ; that "pearl of great price," is to be obtained, though at the price of every thing else, riches, pleasure, fame, friends, worldly comforts, life itself. It seems hardly necessary to caution any intelligent reader against inferring from this passage, that salvation is to be obtained by the sacrifice of worldly goods, or that it can be the subject of any purchase whatever by good works.

47. In this parable of the *draw-net*, we are taught that very diverse characters are brought into the visible church, by the proclamation of the gospel promiscuously to all. The general sentiment differs not much from the parable of the tares, as appears from the application in vs. 49, 50, as compared with vs. 41-43. Some principles are, however, evolved from that parable, which are not contained in this, as the malicious and insidious sowing of evil seed by the adversary, the difficulty of determining between true and false professors, except by their respective fruits, the choosing of the least of two evils. The gospel net would seem to refer to those extraordinary outpourings of the Spirit, by which the word is rendered so effectual, as to bring men in numbers to professedly submit to Christ, some of whom, acted upon by sympathy or motives of self-interest, are far from possessing the grace of God in their hearts. But these, in due time, like the tares, will be gathered out, and for ever separated from the just. Trench says that the central truth of the parable of the tares is the *present* intermixture of the good and bad ;

heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and "gathered of every kind :

48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down,

*n Ch. 22 : 10.*

of the draw-net, the *future* separation ; of that, that men are not to effect the separation ; of this, that the separation will, one day, by God be effected. *A net*, i. e. a *drag* or *draw-net*, which is thrown in a semi-circle, and the portion to which the leaden balls are attached, sinking down, when drawn to the shore or to the ship by each end, it drags along the bottom, and thus encloses in its bosom all the fish in that portion of the water. Trench says that some of these seines on the coast of Cornwall, where they are now used, are a half mile in length, and with the ancients are spoken of as nearly taking in the compass of an entire bay. *Of every kind*, i. e. small and large, good and worthless, for eating. Steir refers it to *things*, as mud, weeds, stones, &c. But this overlooks the antithesis between *good* and *bad*, in v. 48, which refers both to *fishes*.

48. *They drew to shore*. This was the more usual mode of hauling in the net, although sometimes it was drawn into a ship or boat. *And sat down* to sort out the fish which had been taken. Up to this point, the fishermen, like the servants in the parable of the tares, represent the ministers of Christ ; but in this separating process, the angelic ministry at the day of judgment is referred to. It is doing no violence to the laws of parabolic interpretation, to make the fishermen, in their twofold labor of taking and sorting the fish, represent the agency, both of Christ's ministers, and of the angels. The reapers in the parable of the tares, were, doubtless, the same persons who sowed the wheat, and yet as sowers, they represented those who preach the gospel, as reapers, the angels. *Bad* ; literally, *rotten, corrupt, decayed*, and hence, *worthless, useless*. It refers here to the dead and decayed fishes, which were

and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and ° sever the wicked from among the just.

50 <sup>p</sup> And shall cast them into

o Ch. 25: 32.

drawn in with those alive, and also to such as, from their smallness, or some other cause, were unsuitable for food. What an emblem of the hopeless condition of sinners, even though within the pale of the visible church.

49, 50. *So shall it be*, &c. See N. on v. 40. The angels *shall come forth* from heaven to the place of judgment. See N. on v. 41. Their agency in human affairs has been hitherto kept out of sight. Now they are to come forth, as Trench remarks, "from before the throne and presence of God, and walk up and down among men, the visible ministers of his judgment." *Sever*; literally, *mark off by bounds, bound off*. It refers here to a final separation by limits or bounds, never to be passed over. Compare Luke 16: 26. *From among*; literally, *out of the midst*, the expression strongly denoting the comingling of the bad with the good, until the time of this separating process. *And shall cast*, &c. See N. on v. 42. In reference to this verse, Chrysostom calls this *the fearful parable*; and Gregory says of the same, that "it is rather to be feared than explained."

51. *Unto them*, i. e. his disciples. *Have ye understood*, i. e. fully comprehended the spiritual meaning of these parables? At their request our Lord had explained the parables of the sower and the tares. It appears from Mark 4: 34, that he also expounded other parables, when alone with his disciples. But now he tenderly inquires whether they fully understand them, manifesting thereby his readiness to enlighten them still further, if necessary, in respect to the truths and doctrines of the gospel. Thus now he is equally ready to grant the enlightening influence of his Spirit,

the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

51 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe, *which is*

p Ver. 42.

to those who are walking in darkness, or are troubled and perplexed with doubts, as to the import of his commands and promises. I cannot here find with Olshausen, any shade of reproach at their dullness of understanding, but on the contrary, the most tenderly expressed willingness to enlighten them on all points, in respect to which the truth lay hidden from them. *Yea, Lord*. The explanation of the parables of the sower and the tares, had furnished them with the key to the meaning of all. Their answer does not imply, that they understood these mysteries of the kingdom (v. 11), as well then, as afterwards when they received more fully the Spirit of promise (John 16: 13). But as Alford remarks, "the reply must be taken as spoken from their then standing-point, from which but little could be seen of that inner and deeper meaning, which the Holy Spirit has since unfolded." Our Lord knew that their knowledge would be progressive, and this gave rise to his direction in the following verse, which shows the use to which they were to put this knowledge, both what they then had (*things old*), and what they should afterwards attain to (*things new*).

52 *Therefore*, or *on this account*, referring inferentially to their reply, *yea, Lord*. The passage is elliptical, the sense being: *therefore* (you are now prepared to teach others for) *every scribe*, &c. *Which is instructed*; literally, *enrolled and taught as a disciple*. The word *scribe* refers here to a teacher of the gospel, and *instructed unto the kingdom of heaven*, signifies being trained to a knowledge of the spiritual nature of the Messianic reign, and the duties and

instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things* new and old.

53 ¶ And it came to pass, *that*

q Cant. 7 : 13.

requirements of the gospel. It implies more than an admission by discipleship into the Christian church. It refers to the knowledge of the plan of salvation, which is imparted by the illuminating influence of the Spirit, acting through the truth. No one can be a well-instructed scribe, however richly possessed of the stores of human learning, who has not felt the transforming and enlightening power of the truth upon his own heart. *A man that is a householder*; literally, *a man householder*, put simply for *a householder*. *Bringeth forth* for use. *Treasurer*. Put figuratively for *treasury, store-room*, where things are laid away for future use. *Things new and old*. Reference is had here to garments laid away, some recently made, others having lain in the store-room a long time. As they were from time to time needed by the servants, they were brought forth for use, the older or newer garments being dealt out, according to the wants of those who stood in need of them. Thus the disciples of Christ were to lay away in their memory his instructions, and have them in readiness for use, as well as the newer and fresher communications of the Spirit, which might be made to them after his ascension, and also what might result from their own experience in the use and application of the truth.

Thus ends these parables, which contain an amount of truth, perhaps impossible to find elsewhere in so small a compass, and expressed in such clear and striking similitudes. They are all connected and bound together by one great pervading idea, the power and progress of religion in the soul; or in its more general aspect, the steady progress of Christianity from a small be-

when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

54 <sup>r</sup> And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and

<sup>r</sup> Ch. 2 : 23; Ma. 6 : 1; Lu. 4 : 16, 23.

ginning to universal dominion, all her enemies being subdued and destroyed with an everlasting destruction, and her friends shining with sunlike brightness in the abodes of blessedness. What an epitome of history! What distinctness of outline, which, if filled up, would be the complete history of the human race, from the time of the apostasy in Eden, to the consummation of things at the last judgment!

53. *He departed thence*. The regular chronological order of events would now conduct the reader back to 8 : 18, where we find that our Lord entered at this time into a ship, and passed over to the country of the Gadarenes. See Ns. on 12 : 22; 13 : 1.

54-58. JESUS AGAIN AT NAZARETH AND AGAIN REJECTED. Mark 6 : 1-6. This visit of Jesus to his own country took place after the healing of the blind man (9 : 32-34), in reference to which the Pharisees repeated their blasphemous charge before made (12 : 24), that he cast out devils by Satanic agency.

54. *His own country*, i. e. Nazareth, the town of his childhood and youth. The place of his nativity was Bethlehem. *He taught them, &c.* It will be recollected, that on a visit several months previous to this place, his life had been attempted by his infuriated fellow-townsmen. Time had so cooled their anger, or his fame had become so great, that he was now suffered to teach in their synagogue without molestation. But although their temper was not violently manifested, yet they heard him with the same spirit of unbelief, as at the former visit (Luke 4 : 22, 28, 29). The rock of offence on both occasions, seems to have been his humble parentage and condition of life. Olshausen,



said, Whence hath this *man* this wisdom, and *these* mighty works ?

55 \* Is not this the carpenter's son ? is not his mother called

\* Is. 49 : 7 ; Ma. 6 : 3 ; Lu. 3 : 23 ; Jn. 6 : 42.

with other German commentators, maintains that our Lord made only one official visit to Nazareth, and that the one here reported by Matthew is identical with that in Luke 4 : 14-30. But the internal evidence is altogether in favor of regarding them as two separate visits. The question, "whence hath this man this wisdom?" is as suitable for a second visit, when his fame was more widely spread abroad, as for the one narrated in Luke, which took place in the earlier period of his ministry. *Whence hath this man* (literally, *fellow*) *this wisdom?* They could not deny the clearness, depth, and wonderful power of his discourse. But their question, so evidently one of contempt, shows that they were disposed to refer it to any agency or source, rather than to acknowledge that he was taught from above. They were not honest inquirers after truth, but cavillers, seeking for some means of evading its demands upon their assent and obedience. *These mighty works* (literally, *these powers*). See N. on 11 : 21). In this sneering inquiry, they also hint their belief that his miracles are to be attributed to the agency of the devil. This opinion, set on foot by the Pharisees, may have become quite prevalent. Twice at least in the presence of a large multitude, the Pharisees had charged him with being in league with Satan. This was noised abroad. It doubtless was known at Nazareth. In view of his miracles they say : Whence hath this fellow (see above) this wisdom and power? From no other source surely, than the one which our great and learned men have charged upon him. For is he not the carpenter's son? How is it possible that one whom we have known from his boyhood, can all at once be possessed of the power and official dignity, which he claims for himself. It is no proof that this was not the reasoning of their unbelieving hearts, because they were astonished at his

words and acts. When the Pharisees made their blasphemous charge, they were no doubt astonished and sorely puzzled at what they saw. But this astonishment was perfectly consistent with their unbelief.

55. *Is not this* (again *this fellow*) *the carpenter's son?* In Mark : "is not this the carpenter?" Every Jewish parent, according to their canons, was obliged to teach his children some trade. The word here translated *carpenter*, signifies, *artificer, craftsman*, and is generally accompanied by some limiting term, as *in gold, brass, stone, &c.* When it stands, as in the present instance, alone, it always denotes a *carpenter*. This is an interesting item in the life of our Savior, previous to his entering upon his public ministry. That he was an artificer in wood, working at the same trade with his father, is put here beyond a doubt. The Jews say that he made *rakes* and *yokes*. It matters, however, little what was the trade of Jesus. Any occupation is honorable, provided it be honest and useful. It was no greater stoop for him to appear in the person of an humble artificer, than it would have been, had he come as one of the most powerful of earth's potentates. His condescension is beyond the power of language to express, in deigning to appear at all in the form of a man (see Phil. 2 : 6-8). *Is not his mother called* (i. e. named) *Mary?* i. e. is not the woman called Mary, his mother? His low birth on his mother's side, is also brought forward in contempt of his claims. *And his brethren, and his sisters*, are not their names all familiar to us, as members of a family in low and humble condition? From what source then, we repeat, hath this vile impostor these marvellous powers, unless from the Satanic agency attributed to him by our scribes and religious teachers? Their questions seem to indicate that this was their train of thought. As to the question whether

Mary? and 'his brethren, "James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all these things?

57 And they <sup>r</sup> were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, <sup>v</sup> A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

t Ch. 12 : 46. u Ma. 15 : 40. ø Ch. 11 : 6;  
Ma. 6 : 3, 4. y Lu. 4 : 24; Jn. 4 : 44.

these were our Lord's own brethren, or some near kinsmen, much difference of opinion has existed. We will venture to affirm, however, that irrespective of tradition, which is among scholars less and less relied upon, not one intelligent critic would dream of assigning any other than the common meaning, *natural or real brethren and sisters* of our Lord. Of course the whole Romish priesthood would protest against this, as it stamps at once their dogma of Mary's perpetual virginity, as a baseless figment having no foundation in the word of God.

57. *And they were offended in him.* This shows the spirit and temper of their inquiries. They stumbled at his low condition. They could not brook the presumption of one so much their inferior, in claiming to be not only their teacher, but even their long-expected Messiah. *A prophet, &c.* A proverbial expression, than which there is not another one more true, or of more frequent verification. *Not without honor, &c.* is to be taken comparatively in the sense, *is nowhere held in less reputation than in his own country.* The words *in his own house* (i. e. family) are added, either because it was a part of the proverb, or because of the unbelief of some of his kindred (John 7 : 5).

58. *And he did not many mighty works, &c.* It was not, however, from his unwillingness to work miracles, for Mark says that "he laid his hands upon a few sick folk and healed them." It was to be attributed to their obstinate rejection of him, so that few persons availed themselves of the benefit

58 And he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

AT that time <sup>a</sup> Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,

<sup>2</sup> And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is

z Ma. 6 : 5, 6. a Ma. 6 : 14; Lu. 9 : 7.

of his presence by bringing their diseased friends to him for relief. *Unbelief* in him as a teacher sent from God.

#### CHAP. XIV.

1—12. HEROD HEARS OF THE FAME OF JESUS, AND TAKES HIM TO BE JOHN THE BAPTIST, WHOM HE HAD JUST BEHEADED. *Galilee.* Mark 6 : 14—29; Luke 9 : 7—9. The events recorded here took place, while the Twelve were absent on their missionary tour (10 : 5). The Herod here mentioned was Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, to whom after his father's death, Augustus gave Galilee and Perea with the title of Tetrarch, on account of which and his descent from Herod, he was sometimes styled king. At the instigation of Herodias, whom he had married after putting away his first wife, the daughter of Aretas, an Arabian king, he went to Rome, to solicit from the emperor the title and rank of king, but was there accused by Herod Agrippa, the brother of Herodias, and banished to Lugdunum (now Lyons) in Gaul. Afterwards he was sent an exile to Spain, where he died.

1. *The tetrarch.* This title was originally given to the ruler of the fourth part of a district or province, but came afterwards to signify the governor or ruler of any province, subject only to the Roman emperor. *Heard of the fame of Jesus,* either through eye-witnesses of his miracles, or by the preaching of the Twelve, much of whose discourses was doubtless made up of the rehearsal of Christ's words and miracles (see Mark 6 : 14).

risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.

3 <sup>b</sup> For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put

δ Ma. 6:17; Lu. 3:19, 20.

2. *Servants*, i. e. attendants, ministers; not its more usual sense, *servants, slaves*. *This is John the Baptist*. Luke (9:7) says that he was greatly perplexed, because it was said by some that John was risen from the dead, and by others, that there was in Jesus a reappearance of Elias, or some one of the old prophets (see Mark 6:15). These reports and impressions of the people threw Herod into doubt and perplexity, as to who Jesus was, but at last, through terrors of conscience at his cruel murder of John the Baptist, he came to the belief that he had risen from the dead. Such was his fear and suspense that he earnestly desired to see Jesus, (Luke 9:9), in order that his doubts might be thus removed. *He is risen*, &c. Although Herod belonged to the sect of the Sadducees (see Ns. on 16:6; Mark 8:15), who denied the existence of the soul after death, yet like many, who in the hour of alarm, abandon their false views of religion, he unhesitatingly avowed his belief in the doctrine of the resurrection, and the soul's future existence beyond the grave. *From the dead*, not from the state or condition of death, but *from among the dead*, as opposed to those living on the earth. For the use of the article, see N. on 8:20. *Therefore*; literally, *on account of this*. It would be a natural inference of such a mind as Herod's, that one who had risen from the dead would be possessed of preternatural power. *Mighty works*; literally, *mighty works are in operation or work in him*; or, if the verb be taken in a passive sense, *miracles are effected by him*. The former rendering is preferable, the intransitive use of the verb in the sense of *to operate, to work*, being quite common in the New Testament.

3. The account of the beheading of

him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.

4 For John said unto him, ° It is not lawful for thee to have her.

5 And when he would have put

ε Le. 18:16, & 20:21.

John is here inserted, as a kind of explanatory parenthesis, the reader not having yet been informed of his death, or the circumstances attending it. *Had laid hold*. John's apprehension and imprisonment took place, while our Lord was in Judea, after his first passover (see 4:12; Mark 1:14; Luke 4:14). Its proper position in the narrative would have been just before Christ's departure into Galilee, spoken of in John 4:1-3, and next to the passages in the other evangelists above quoted. *In prison* (see N. on 11:2) is put for *into prison*, the idea of subsequent confinement in prison being predominant (see N. on 3:6; 10; 16; Mark 16:46). His confinement was, perhaps adopted as a protection against Herodias. See N. on Mark 6:20. It is generally, however, attributed to the exasperation of Herod, at his reproof on account of his scandalous connection with Herodias. *For Herodias's sake*, i. e. on account of the reproof John gave him for marrying Herodias, who was both his own niece, and wife of his half-brother Philip Herod.

4. *It is not lawful*, &c. Herod had committed several heinous sins by this marriage. He had put away without just cause, his own wife, was living in adultery with another man's wife, and was guilty of incest in marrying his own niece (see Levit. 18:16).

5. *And when he would have put*, &c. It appears from Mark 6:19, 20, that Herodias was greatly incensed at John, and would have killed him, had not Herod through his great reverence for him, refused to yield to her wishes. But now, worn out by her importunities, and probably becoming offended with John, at the faithfulness with which he continued to rebuke his sin,

him to death, he feared the multitude, <sup>d</sup> because they counted him as a prophet.

6 But when Herod's birth-day was kept, the daughter of Herod

*d* Ch. 21 : 26; Lu. 20 : 6.

he was only hindered from putting him to death through fear of the people, who regarded him as a prophet. Thus there is no inconsistency between this and v. 9. Josephus says that the Jews looked upon the subsequent calamities of Herod, as a judgment of God for his injustice to this holy man. *The multitude*, i. e. the populace. The people of Galilee were turbulent, and with great difficulty were kept from open rebellion against any governor who held authority from the Roman power. It was the theatre of many insurrections, and led the way in the final rebellion, which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem, by Titus. *Counted*; literally *held*, i. e. regarded. *A prophet*, i. e. a religious teacher, ranking with the Old Testament prophets, in piety and self-denying labor.

6. The direct narration is now resumed from v. 2, which was interrupted by the explanatory digression in vs. 3-5. *But when Herod's birth-day was kept*. It appears from Mark (6 : 21), that this day was regarded by Herodias as a favorable time to put into execution her murderous designs. It was "a convenient day," an opportune occasion for obtaining Herod's consent to John's death. It was with this intent, that she caused her daughter to dance before Herod and his company, either foreseeing that he would make such an extravagant promise as he did, or hoping in some way to gain her end. *The daughter of Herodias*. Her name was Salome, daughter of Herodias by her former husband. She was afterwards the wife of her uncle Philip, tetrarch of Ituræa and Trachonitis, and on his death, married her cousin Aristobolus, by whom she had three sons, Herod, Agrippa, and Aristobolus. *Danced*. It is thought by some that

dias danced before them, and pleased Herod.

7 Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.

reference is had here to an immodest, lascivious dance of the pantomimic kind, which had been recently introduced into Judea, and which was the subject of such severe censure by Juvenal and other Roman satirists. But it is not necessary to suppose this outrage of common decency, to render this affair more improper and unbecoming than it would appear, viewed as a mere dance, in which elegance of motion was its principal and attractive feature. For a young maiden of her high birth to administer, as a common dancer, to the pleasure of a body of carousers around Herod's table, was a very great departure from maidenly modesty. It was certainly an uncommon occurrence and perhaps was intended by Herodias to take the company by surprise, in order, during the extravagant applause, which it might be anticipated such an act would elicit, to seize upon some way of accomplishing her bloody purpose. *Before them*; literally, *in the midst of, among*, designating her bold and intimate approach to this company of revellers. *And pleased Herod* ("and them that sat with him," Mark 6 : 22). He was pleased not only with her graceful movements, but at this evidence of her and her mother's desire to contribute to his own, and the entertainment of his guests, on this festive occasion.

7. *Whereupon he promised, &c.* He had doubtless no idea of the tragic consequences, which were to follow this rash promise. It was thoughtlessly made, and in the excess of his rapture at the condescension of the damsel and her graceful movements, he seems to have repeated several times the promise, and also the oath, as both Matthew and Mark use the plural *oaths*, in referring to Herod's scruples about violating his promise. *Whatsoever she would*



8 And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John the Baptist's head in a charger.

9 And the king was sorry: nev-

ask, &c. Mark (6: 23) relates it, "whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom." A very inflated and braggart promise, from one who was governor of only two provinces of Judea, and which he held as the vassal of the Roman emperor. But the promise was made, and the end for which the damsel danced was gained. According to the instruction of her mother, to whom she immediately repaired for direction as to the request she should make, she demanded the head of John as her reward. The Forerunner of the Messiah, who had come, as was foretold, in the spirit and power of Elias, the greatest of all the prophets of the old dispensation, was to be sacrificed to gratify the revenge of a wicked woman, and as a reward of one who had danced for the amusement of a band of revellers. Truly in this instance at least, truth presents stranger incidents than fiction.

8. *Being before instructed*; literally, *being put forward or urged on*. She seems to have hesitated at the cold-blooded proposal of her mother, or, perhaps, she wished to prefer a request for something more congenial to her youthful taste, but she at last yielded, and came with haste (Mark 6: 15), and demanded that there should be given her immediately (see Mark) the head of John. The palace where Herod held his feast, was either at or very near the castle of Machærus where John was confined. *In a charger*, i. e. a platter or dish, in which food was served up at table.

9. *Was sorry*. See N. on v. 5. The word in the original denotes excessive grief, and in Mark it is the very same which our Savior used, when he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." Herod's grief at the consequence of his rash and foolish oath,

ertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded *it* to be given *her*.

10 And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.

was no doubt real. It was scarcely possible that he should have felt otherwise. He had a high respect for John. He admired his bold and lofty zeal as a reformer. He had watched over and protected him from the rage of Herodias (see Mark 6: 20). He had listened to his religious discourses with pleasure. But now he had been entrapped to give him up to his most implacable foe. No wonder he was chagrined and distressed. *For his oath's sake*, i. e. through a scrupulous regard to the sanctity of his oaths. This was groundless. His promise was rash and unlawful. He had no right to make such an unconditional one. And when thus perverted by Herodias to so murderous a purpose, on every principle of ethics, it ought at once to have been broken. No oath, in whatever circumstances it may have been made, can justify murder. It is strange that a man should thus put, as Herod did, a rash and thoughtless promise before a principle of eternal rectitude; that he should have more regard for an appearance of firmness in the eyes of his guests, than for the life of one of the greatest and most honored messengers, that God has commissioned to reveal his will to man. *Them which sat with him*; literally, *who reclined with him* (at table). Herod wished to show his appreciation of the entertainment afforded to his guests, by granting the damsel's request.

10. *He sent and beheaded John*. However great his distress at his foolish promise, he did not long hesitate. *Immediately* he sent out an executioner, and commanded John's head to be brought (see Mark 6: 27). It must have been in the night time, when this bloody mandate was issued and executed. We may imagine the man of God suddenly awakened from sleep by the executioner with the instrument of death in

11 And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought *it* to her mother.

12 And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

his hand. Perhaps not a moment was allowed him to utter a prayer to God, or take leave of his sorrowing disciples. It was all done in haste, and from beginning to end, was one of the most remarkable tragedies of blood and crime, which has been committed to history.

11. *Gave it to the damsel.* What a scene for a painter. A young girl conveying to her mother, on a platter, the gory head of her victim, as a price of the amusement she had furnished to the wicked king and his guests. There is a tradition that Herodias treated the head in a most shameful manner, pulling out the tongue and piercing it with a needle.

12. *And his disciples came.* They were not in the prison, for Mark says (6 : 29), "when his disciples heard of it they came," &c. *And buried it.* Herod, doubtless, gave them permission, willing to do something towards effacing the guilt, which for ever afterwards must have burdened his conscience. *Went and told Jesus.* To whom could they more appropriately go, in this hour of their sorrow and bereavement, than to him whom their deceased master had hailed as the Messiah which was to come, and whose mighty works some of them had been permitted to see (compare 11 : 4, 5 ; Luke 7 : 21, 22). They acquainted him with this act of Herod's cruelty, and probably gave him timely warning of danger from the same quarter, for we are told in the next verse, that Jesus took the precaution to retire to a desert place, until the danger was in a measure past.

13-21. ON THE RETURN OF THE TWELVE, JESUS RETIRES WITH THEM ACROSS THE LAKE. FIVE THOUSAND ARE FED. *Capernaum.* N. E. coast of

13 ¶ When Jesus heard of *it*, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

14 And Jesus went forth, and  
e Ch. 10 : 23, & 12 : 15 ; Ma. 6 : 32 ; Lu. 9 : 10 ;  
Jn. 6 : 1, 2.

*the Lake of Galilee.* Mark 6 : 30-44 ; Luke 9 : 10-17.

13. *When Jesus heard of it*, i. e. John's martyrdom and Herod's opinion of himself (see v. 2). The distance of Machærus to Capernaum will account for any seeming discrepancy between this and v. 1. It would, as Alford remarks, be some days before the news could have reached Jesus, and the report mentioned in v. 1, might reach Herod in the mean time, and the message which the disciples brought to our Lord might have included both particulars, the death of their master, and the saying of Herod respecting himself. *He departed thence*, &c. He was at this time in Capernaum. He now retires to the north-east coast of the lake, not far from the northern Bethsaida or Julias (see Luke 9 : 10). Previously to his passage across the lake, the Twelve returned from their circuit, and made a report of what things they had done and taught (Mark 6 : 30, 31 ; Luke 9 : 10). It was in part, doubtless, to furnish a season of repose to his disciples that he crossed the lake. *Desert place*, i. e. an uninhabited district. *Apart* from others except his disciples. *Had heard thereof*, viz. that he was crossing the lake in a certain direction. *They followed him on foot*, i. e. by land, in contradistinction from his crossing the lake in a ship. Mark (6 : 33) says that "they ran afoot, thither, out of all cities, and outwent them (i. e. Jesus and his disciples) and came together unto him." So great was their desire to hear his words and witness his mighty deeds. *Out of the cities* of that part of Galilee. Their numbers were, doubtless, increased, as they passed through the towns

saw a great multitude, and <sup>f</sup> was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

15 <sup>g</sup> And when it was evening, his disciples came to him,

<sup>f</sup> Ch. 9 : 36; Ma. 6 : 34.

and villages, which lay between Capernaum and this northern Bethsaida.

14. *Went forth*, i. e. landed from the ship in which he had crossed the lake. Alford says "from his place of retirement." But see Mark 6 : 33, where it appears that the people who went around the lake on foot, reached the place where he was to land before him. Of course he could not have come forth "from his place of retirement" to meet them. In the parallel passage in Mark, Alford has adopted the right exposition, which shows that his comment here in Matthew was an inadvertence. *Saw c great multitude*. These had come by land, as above stated, with such expedition, that they had reached the place before Jesus and his disciples. Alford suggests that this vast concourse was collected, on their journey to Jerusalem to keep the passover, which was at hand (John 6 : 4). But in passing around the lake to meet Jesus, they would seem to have gone in an opposite direction. *Was moved with compassion*. See N. on 9 : 36. The eagerness manifested by this vast crowd to wait upon his ministry, and their spiritual destitution, excited our Savior's deepest sympathies. Instead, therefore, of claiming the privilege of retirement, for which he had crossed the lake, he received them kindly (Luke 9 : 11), and imparted to them instruction (Mark 6 : 34), and healed their sick. How precious are these instances of our Savior's love and condescension. John (6 : 3) says that he went up into a mountain, and there sat and taught the people.

15. *And when it was evening*. In Luke, "when the day began to wear away." The first evening as it was called, commenced just before sunset, or, as some say, at three o'clock, the se-

saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.

16 But Jesus said unto them,

<sup>g</sup> Ma. 6 : 35; Lu. 9 : 12; Jn. 6 : 5.

cond evening, at sunset. The former evening is the one referred to here, the latter, v. 23. With the Samaritans, the first evening commenced at sunset, the second, when it began to grow dark. *Came unto him*, in order to address him. Perhaps they had been dispersed among the crowd to learn more fully their condition, or to assist in imparting instruction to such, as could not come within sound of our Savior's voice. *This is a desert place*. See N. on v. 13. *The time is now past*, i. e. the day is now far spent. *Send the multitude away*, i. e. dismiss the assembly by bringing the discourse to a close. It is worthy of note, that so deeply interested was our Lord in the spiritual welfare of those whom he addressed, and so intent were the people upon his instructions, that neither he nor they seem to have taken notice that the day was drawing to a close, and that it was high time for the assembly to break up, in order to repair for lodging and refreshment to the neighboring towns and villages. *And buy themselves victuals*; literally, *eatables, solid food*, as opposed to milk and other liquids. With such haste had they departed from home, when they heard that Jesus was crossing the lake, that they had made no provision for their temporal wants, and were therefore in this desert place without any food. Some of them must have been at this time faint with hunger.

16. In regard to this great miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, one of the most stupendous ever wrought on earth, the Evangelists are all full and circumstantial. It is related by the whole four, and their account of it should be carefully compared, in order to become acquainted with all the attending circumstances. John (6 : 5-7)

They need not depart; give ye them to eat.

17 And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

18 He said, Bring them hither to me.

makes particular mention of the trial of Philip's faith in our Lord's question, as to where bread should be purchased for so great a multitude, when "he himself knew what he would do." When Philip replied that two hundred pennyworth (\$30) of bread would not suffice to give each one a very little, Andrew remarked (John 5 : 8) that a lad was present with five barley loaves and two small fishes, but like Philip, betrayed his want of faith by the inquiry, "what are these among so many?" *They need not depart* fasting and faint with hunger. *Give ye them, &c.* This direction is found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and was given for the purpose of trying them, and awakening their attention to what was to follow.

17. *And they said.* Andrew, as we have seen, was the spokesman. *Loaves.* These were made in the form of round cakes, nine or ten inches in diameter, suitable to be broken rather than cut. The particular statement of the quantity of food on hand, found in all the Evangelists, was made in order to prevent all doubts of the actual performance of a miracle. It appears from John 6 : 9, that it was a lad (literally, *one little boy*), in whose possession these provisions were found, so that it is not to be referred to a supply of food belonging to the disciples themselves, although, as is hinted in Note on v. 19, it may have been sent by some kind friend, for the use of Jesus and his disciples.

18. *Bring them, &c.* As these elements of food were to be miraculously increased, it was proper that they should be placed before him, both that his creative power might be definitely exerted, and its effects more fully seen by the multitude.

19. *To sit down*, i. e. to recline upon the grass, according to the usual posture in those times. The place was very

19 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, <sup>h</sup> he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

<sup>h</sup> Ch. 15 : 36.

suitable and convenient, on account of the abundance of grass (John 6 : 10). Mark and Luke speak of the manner in which they were to recline, viz. in ranks by hundreds and by fifties. This was necessary not only for the preservation of order, and convenience in distributing the food, but also that the wants of all might be duly attended to, and none passed by in so great a multitude. *And took the five loaves, &c.* He probably elevated them in sight of the people, while he invoked God's blessing, or as some think, merely touched them with his hand. There was an appropriateness and dignity in the act, which must strike the mind of every reader. *Looking up to heaven*, as that was the seat of his Heavenly Father, and what he was about to do was in harmony with his relations to the Godhead. The Greeks and Romans in prayer always extended their hands in the direction of the divinities invoked, upward, horizontally, or earthward, according as they prayed to the celestial, terrestrial, or infernal deities. *And brake, &c.* See N. on v. 17. These loaves were of barley (John 6 : 9), and as they constituted the food which this lad had brought, probably for the use of Jesus and his disciples, we see how frugal was their fare, and that on this occasion, although Christ could have easily supplied the five thousand with the richest food, yet he chose to exert his power on the miraculous enlargement of plain, wholesome food. These incidents are to be noted, as we meditate upon this wondrous transaction. *And gave the loaves, &c.* The creative process was exerted, no doubt, upon the food, as it passed from his hand, and not as Meyer and some others think, during its distribution by the disciples.



20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

21 And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

22 ¶ And straightway Jesus

20. *And they did all eat, &c.* This declares the miracle. There were but five ordinary-sized loaves and two small fishes. From this small quantity of food, they all ate, and were fully satisfied (see John 6: 11), although in a state of such extreme hunger, that no ordinary quantity would have sufficed to satisfy the cravings of their appetite. *And they* (i. e. the disciples) *took up* (at his command, John 6: 12), *of the fragments that remained, twelve baskets full*; literally, *what remained of the fragments, twelve baskets full*. These fragments or broken pieces were gathered from the place, when our Saviour broke and distributed the loaves, and also from what was left by those who eat. See John 6: 13. "This union of careful savingness with creative power, is a feature so peculiar, that it impresses, beyond all mistake, a heavenly character on the narrative." Olshausen. The basket here spoken of was the Jewish travelling basket, which of course would be large enough, to contain provisions for a traveller for several days if it was necessary. This shows the superabundance of food, and the completeness of the miracle. The quantity which remained was far greater, than that which they had on hand before the repast. The miracle took place in the presence of thousands, and on the mind of no one could there rest the shadow of doubt as to its reality. Indeed, it so impressed the multitude with a sense of his power, that mistaking the spiritual nature of his mission, and groaning under the harsh and cruel exactions of the Roman governors, they were about to "take him by force and make him a king." John 6: 15. If a man of such extraordinary power was not their Messiah, they might correctly have concluded, that it was vain to look for another. It will be seen also that the enmity of the Pharisees was from this time more virulent against him, doubt-

less provoked thereto by his stupendous miracle, and the popular demonstration in his favor.

21. *They that had eaten*; literally, *the persons eating*. Prof. Stuart is wrong in saying that in this and similar instances, the present participle in the Greek has the sense of the imperfect. It represents time present, but in reference to a past act of numbering the persons who had eaten. *Were about five thousand men*. As they had been arranged by hundreds and fifties, their number could be taken with very great exactness. Five thousand is doubtless here used for a round number, but was exact enough for all practical purposes. In such a connection it was of very little consequence, whether the number was a little more, or a little less than 5000. *Besides women and children*. The whole number could not have fallen short of 10,000 persons. In view of this great miracle, we cannot wonder that the people exclaimed, "this is of a truth that Prophet, that should come into the world." John 6: 14.

22-36. JESUS ON A MOUNTAIN IN PRAYER. HE WALKS UPON THE WATER. *Lake of Galilee. Genessareth*. Mark 6: 45-56. John 6: 15-21. *And straightway Jesus, &c.* It appears from John 6: 15, that the people were now desirous to make Jesus a king. The eyes which saw no evidence of his Messiahship in the signs spoken of in 11: 5, were now opened by this stupendous miracle, which brought his claims nearer to their preconceived notions respecting the Messiah.

They were now ready to receive him as their king. Who could better lead them to victory over their Roman oppressors, than he who could feed ten thousand persons upon five loaves and two fishes? Jesus, however, would permit no such notion to be entertained. He forthwith sent his disciples on board

constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

23 <sup>i</sup> And when he had sent the

*i* Ma. 6 : 46.

the ship, in which they had previously crossed the lake (see v. 13), and at once dismissed the multitude before they could have time to take any political step which would give umbrage to the public authorities. Some think that the words, *constrained his disciples*, implies their reluctance to depart, being influenced by ambitious views, and thinking the time now favorable for him to set up his kingdom. It is better, however, to refer it to a natural desire, on their part, to linger at the place where they had witnessed so remarkable a scene. *Unto the other side*, i. e. unto Bethsaida of Galilee, not to the Bethsaida or Julias on the north-eastern side of the lake, in the vicinity of which they then were. See N. on v. 13. John says (6 : 17) that "they entered into a ship and went over the sea toward Capernaum." These two places lay in the same general direction of S. W. from the place where they embarked. Olshausen suggests that the disciples may have intended first to have put in at the one point, and then sailed on to the other. *While he sent*. The people would be less reluctant to disperse, if they saw the disciples going on board ship, and knew from this that Jesus intended to leave.

23. *He went up into a mountain*; literally, *the mountain*, referring to the range which encircled the lake, and here lay back of the northern Bethsaida. Christ chose this hour of prayer and communion with God, because its quiet stillness was favorable to devotion, and because the hours of the day were all spent in the public duties of his ministry. John (6 : 15) seems to connect this devotional retirement of our Lord, with the popular movement to "take him by force to make him a king." He deemed it prudent to retire a while from their sight, and as his

multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: <sup>k</sup>and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

24 But the ship was now in the

*k* Jn. 6 : 16.

disciples were now on the lake, he withdrew to the mountain. It must also be remembered, that he was a man, having human passions and emotions, and the honors which the people were ready to force upon him, could not but have agitated his mind, although not with the least desire to possess them. He therefore retired to gain calmness and singleness of purpose, for his great work of privation, suffering, and death, by prayer and communion with his Father. In this he should be an example to us, when agitated and disturbed by worldly influences, or by the proffer of human honors. *The evening*. *The second evening*. See N. on v. 15. *He was there alone*. He had come to this desert place with his disciples, in order to enjoy a little quiet and repose. But in this he had been disappointed, for the people were present by thousands to meet him as he landed. Now while others were refreshing themselves with sleep, he was on the mountain alone, engaged in acts of devotion and enjoying communion with God. In how many interesting positions do we find him in his ministry. Sometimes preaching from a ship to thousands on the shore; at other times, sitting on the hill side and instructing the people; now in the synagogue putting to silence his cavilling enemies, and then performing in the private house of a friend some of the most sublime miracles. At one time he authoritatively cleanses the temple of unlawful traffic, at another, he sits over against Jerusalem, predicting with tears its rapidly approaching doom. But in no attitude of more heavenly sublimity does he appear, than when on some solitary mountain, he passes the night in prayer, pleading with his Father for those who have believed on him, and for the multitudes who throng upon his ministry.

midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

26 And when the disciples saw

him <sup>1</sup>walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

27 But straightway Jesus spake

<sup>1</sup>Job 9:8.

24 *In the midst of the sea.* They were probably three or four miles from land (see John 6:19), and as the lake was only some ten miles in diameter, they were in the midst of it, as here said. *Tossed with the waves.* The word translated *tossed*, is the one translated *torment* in 8:29, and has often that sense in other places in the New Testament. It literally signifies *to test* a thing, and then to elicit truth by torture, from which it has the signification, *to torture, torment, &c.* The ship was metaphorically said to be tortured by the waves, its strength being tested to the utmost in this stormy sea, and almost yielding to the violence of the wind and waves. *Was contrary.* The gale was not only one of extreme violence, but directly against their course. They were struggling against it with the oars (Mark 6:48; John 6:19), but made little or no headway.

25. *The fourth watch.* The Roman night was divided into four watches of three hours each, the guard at the end of each watch being changed. The Jews, who had divided the night into three watches of four hours each, after their subjugation by the Romans, adopted their division. The fourth watch began at 3 o'clock in the morning. This shows how little headway the ship had made, that at so late an hour, they had only rowed some 25 or 30 furlongs (John 6:19). *Jesus went unto them.* The force of the original is: *went forth* (from the mountain) *and came to them.* Mark says (6:48), that he saw them toiling and rowing. As the night was dark and tempestuous, he could only have seen them with his omniscient eye, to which the darkness is as the light (Ps 139:11, 12). *Walking on the sea.* What a series of sublime manifestations. In Job 9:8, it is said that

“God alone treadeth upon the waves of the sea.” The Egyptian hieroglyphic for an impossibility, was a man’s feet resting upon the sea. Our Lord in a variety of ways manifested his divine character. He had shown his creative power in the miracle of the loaves and fishes, his omniscience, in looking through the darkness of the night upon his disciples, and his ability to do what to the human mind was the symbol of impossibility, to walk upon the waves of the sea.

26. *When the disciples saw him.* He was then quite close to them, for Mark (6:48) says that “he came unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them,” (on which see N. on v. 32.) This he did to try their faith, and to give them a more vivid sense of his protective power, in saving Peter when beginning to sink. *They were troubled.* Such was their dimness of vision in the darkness, and so strange the sight, that they did not recognize Jesus, but thinking it to be some spirit, they cried out with fear. An appearance like this could not but terrify any band of men. It was as when the spirit in its dim outlines, passed before Eliphaz in the visions of the night, or as Daniel’s vision of the glorious personage standing upon the waters of the Hiddekel (Dan. 10:5-8; 12:7). No wonder that those in the ship “cried out for fear.”

27. *But straightway Jesus, &c.* Their kind and compassionate Master did not suffer them to remain long, in this state of extreme terror. He immediately addressed them in his calm and well-known tones: *be of good cheer*, take courage and let not your spirits sink; *It is I*, your master and friend; *be not afraid* at my strange and unexpected presence. What words of peace and

unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

comfort. What tender and watchful care over his disciples. How many times by his Spirit has he since whispered to the poor sinner's heart, overwhelmed with a sense of its lost condition, and troubled with fearful visions of a judgment to come, *It is I, be not afraid.* Precious words, which shall furnish comfort to the troubled soul, until all God's children are brought over life's stormy sea to the haven of peace and safety above. *It is I,* the English idiom for the Greek, *I am* (he), i. e. *I am* the one who addresses you, both forms of expression being based on the idea, that the person uttering them is well known, by the tones of his voice or general appearance.

28. *And Peter answered him, &c.* We have here an act strikingly characteristic of Peter, and as it has been aptly termed, a rehearsal of his denial afterwards. There was the same presumption, followed by failure in the time of trial, and a merciful recovery from the sad effect of his self-confidence and presumption. It is uncertain what was his real motive in making this strange request. From the doubt, seemingly at least implied in the words, *if it be thou*, it would appear that he wished a confirmation of the real presence of Christ by another miracle. Or perhaps we may give it this sense: *since or inasmuch as it is thou.* That the conjunction in the original may have this meaning is beyond dispute (6: 30; John 13: 17; 7: 23; 10: 35; Luke 12: 28). The general sentiment would then be: *Inasmuch as it is thou, I am so relieved of fear, that I am willing at thy command to step forth from the ship, and come to thee upon the water.* Neither of these interpretations, however, exonerates Peter from the charge of unbelief and vain confidence, which in the sequel was signally rebuked by his divine Master. *Bid me*, i. e. enable me,

29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

30 But when he saw the wind

as the command implies the necessary ability to perform it. *On the water*; literally, *along upon the water.* The expression varies somewhat from the words *on the sea*, in v. 25, where rest upon the sea is the predominant idea, while here it is motion *towards* or *along over.* Peter was intent only on reaching his Master, and kept the idea of rest upon the water out of sight in the expression. It perhaps may not be pressing this variation from v. 25 too far to say, that in it may be discerned a premonition of Peter's wavering faith, which caused him in the trial to sink in the waters and exclaim, Lord, save me.

29. *And he said, Come.* Our Lord gratified Peter's request, although it savored at least of presumption, in order to try him, and teach him thereby a valuable lesson. *Was come down out of the ship*; literally, *descending from the ship.* It was a small fishing vessel, from the side of which one could easily step down upon the water. *He walked upon the water.* The tense in the original does not admit the sense given by some interpreters, *he attempted or tried to walk upon the water.* It expresses an act which he performed. He evidently walked on the element a short distance, probably a few steps only. His faith was active, until the dark and angry waves caused him to lose sight of his Savior. Then he wavered in his purpose and began to sink. What a rich lesson of instruction in times of trial. Jesus is to be kept before the eye of faith, as an all-powerful and compassionate Savior. With him in sight, no wave of affliction can overwhelm the soul, or shake its serenity. *To go to Jesus.* This should be the aim and object of all our actions. But even in the act of going to Jesus, we need great faith, such as we can receive only from him through the agency of his Spirit.

30. *Boisterous*, i. e. blowing vehe-



boisterous, he was afraid ; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O

mently. With this was also connected the sight of the black and raging waters. *To sink* ; literally, *to sink down into the sea*. The word is very full and expressive. He was, doubtless, from his occupation as a fisherman, a strong and expert swimmer. But now weak and helpless, he was sinking down into the angry flood, with no power in himself to avert his destruction. *Lord, save me*. Now, his infidelity, or his presumption and self-confidence, or whatever improper motive prompted him to take this perilous step, wholly left him. Weak, powerless, and confiding as a little child, he throws himself in this moment of danger upon Christ, and finds his hand immediately stretched forth for his relief.

31. *Immediately Jesus*, &c. This shows that Peter was not far from his Master, when his faith failed him, and he began to sink. Thus the soul of the believer often faints through doubt and distrust, even when within reach of an Almighty Savior upon whom to recline. *O thou of little faith*, &c. Peter had volunteered an exhibition of his strong faith. It was uncalled for, and savored of presumption and pride, if not of unbelief as to the reality of his Savior's presence. But how tenderly is he here rebuked. He is reminded of his weak faith, and that he had no reason to doubt, when his divine Master was so near him. It is not probable that his fellow disciples even heard the admonition, in such sweet and gentle tones was it given. In all these incidents, how lovely does the character of Jesus appear. *Didst thou doubt* ; literally, *was in a state of uncertainty* between two objects. It refers here to the doubt and uncertainty which sprang up in Peter's mind, as to whether the waves would swallow him up, or he would experience his Savior's protection, and which failure of his faith was

thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ?

32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him,

immediately followed by his sinking in the waters.

32. *And when they were come*, &c. Some cavillers who are ever ready, and even searching, to find contradictions, translate John 6 : 21, *they were willing to receive him into the ship*, and deny that he really did come on board at this time. But it is evident that this expression stands in contrast with their previous unwillingness through terror to receive him, until they were fully convinced by his conversation with Peter, that he was their Master. It may have been their repelling exclamations and gestures, which, in part at least, caused him to pass the ship, as though he had no intention of coming on board. But so great and urgent was their need of his assistance, that having thus tried them, he made himself known, and was accosted by Peter, in the words given by Matthew. The passage may then be read with the natural ellipsis, *they wished to take him* (and did take him) *into the ship*. *The wind ceased*. Here was another stupendous miracle. As soon as Jesus came on board, the tempest was lulled, and they almost immediately came to the desired port (John 6 : 21).

33. *Came and worshipped him*. Mark (6 : 51) says that "they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure and wondered." There was something in Christ's walking on the sea and stilling the tempest, so indicative of divine majesty and power, that it caused them to lose sight of that equally wondrous miracle of the loaves and fishes, wrought but a few hours previous (see Mark 6 : 52). Now they fall down and do homage to him as to a superior being. *Of a truth* &c., literally, *truly Son of God art thou*. The absence of the article in the original has led some to translate, *Son of a God*, and to refer the exclamation to the mariners of the

saying, Of a truth <sup>m</sup> thou art the Son of God.

34 ¶ <sup>n</sup> And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret.

35 And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they

*m* Ps. 2 : 7 ; Ma. 1 : 1 ; ch. 16 : 16, & 26 : 63 ; Lu. 4 : 41 ; Jn. 1 : 49, & 6 : 69, & 11 : 27 ; Ac. 8 : 37 ; Ro. 1 : 4.

ship, who might have been Pagans. But there is no proof that the apostles, who were so many of them well acquainted with the management of the small craft of the lake, did not themselves work the vessel ; or if other persons were hired to do this service, there is no evidence whatever, that they were Pagans. It would also be unnatural to suppose that the apostles, with hearts alive to his transcendent worth, should at this time be silent, while pagan mariners were prostrating themselves and offering him the highest ascriptions of praise. Equally valid and pertinent would be this objection against the words being uttered by Jewish mariners. They are most unquestionably the words of the Twelve, and are to be taken in their usual acceptation, *the Son of God*, i. e. the Messiah, so called and regarded by the Jews.

34. *Gone over the lake. Land of Gennesaret.* This was a small region of Galilee, on the western shore of the lake, described by Josephus as nearly four Roman miles in length, and two and a half in breadth. On the north-east extremity of this plain is supposed to have been the site of Capernaum, near which our Lord landed. See John 6 : 24, 25, 59. The lake was sometimes called the *Lake of Gennesaret*, from this fertile and populous district.

35. *Of that place*, i. e. Capernaum. See John as above cited. *Had knowledge of him*, i. e. knew or recognized him. *They sent out*, &c. Mark (6 ; 55) says that they "ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was."

36. *And besought him*, &c. This showed their faith in his power and

sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased ;

36 And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment : and <sup>o</sup> as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

*n* Ma. 6 : 53. *o* Ch. 9 : 20 ; Ma. 3 : 10 ; Lu. 6 : 19 ; Ac. 19 : 12.

readiness to heal. *The hem of his garment.* See N. on 9 : 20. *And as many as touched*, &c. It was not necessary that each diseased person should be brought to receive the special healing influence of Jesus, by the laying on of his hands, or some other outward act. His omniscient eye and omnipresent power could see and heal multitudes at the same moment of time, provided they had faith to avail themselves of his aid. They could not stand afar off and receive the blessing. They must approach so near as to come in contact with his person. This was a test of their faith, and at the same time showed that the healing influence came from him.

This chapter is full of incident and instruction. The tragic death of John furnishes an admonitory lesson against habits of criminal indulgence, which bring in their train such doleful consequences, as followed the adulterous connection of Herod and Herodias. The folly and sin of rash promises, and the still greater sin of performing them when opposed to the law of God, are nowhere taught more forcibly than in the promise made by Herod, with its bloody fulfillment. The great miracles of the loaves and fishes, the walking on the sea, the stilling of the tempest, which alone were enough to stamp the seal of divinity upon our Savior's character, are related in this chapter, in simple, but graphic terms. The readiness of Christ to heal those who were brought to him, exhausted, as he must have been, with the labors of the preceding day, and his sleepless night upon the mountain, are also worthy of note, and show how untiring he was in his labors of mercy and love.

## CHAPTER XV.

THEN <sup>a</sup> came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,

*a* Ma. 7 : 1.

## CHAP. XV.

1-20. THE PHARISEES FIND FAULT WITH THE DISCIPLES FOR EATING WITH UNWASHEN HANDS. PHARISAIC TRADITIONS. *Capernaum*. Mark 7 : 1-23. In order to preserve the thread of our Savior's history, we must turn to John 6 : 22-71 ; 7 : 1, where we find our Lord's discourse to those who came to him on the next morning after the stilling of the tempest at Capernaum, and whose political views of his mission received a decided check in his reproof of those who followed him for the meat which perisheth, that is, for the furtherance of ambitious and worldly views. On that occasion he also declared more fully the spiritual nature of his kingdom, which caused some who had been his disciples from ambitious views to depart from him. About three weeks from this time, the third passover in our Savior's ministry took place (see John 6 : 4). Jesus did not attend this passover, for reasons given in John 7 : 1. It appears, however, that the chief priests and Pharisees were so exasperated by the reports received on that occasion by his miracles, and the general favor with which he was received by the people, that they sent some of their number to watch and entrap him, if possible, into some word or act which might furnish a ground of accusation against him. The present chapter opens with an attempt, on the part of these scribes and Pharisees, to fasten a charge upon him for transgressing the tradition of the elders, in eating with unwashen hands.

1. *Which were of Jerusalem*, i. e. who had their residence in Jerusalem. They were doubtless men eminent for learning and ability. Those who had followed him on a previous occasion (see 12 : 2, 4), were probably persons of less note belonging to Galilee.

2. *Why do thy disciples transgress, &c.*

2 <sup>b</sup> Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.

*b* Ma. 7 : 5. *c* Col. 2 : 8.

It appears from Mark (8 : 2-5), who gives more in detail their superstitious scrupulousness, in frequently washing themselves and their household utensils, that they first noticed the fault here complained of in the disciples, and probably had some conference respecting it, before they proposed this question to Jesus. *The tradition of the elders*. The traditionary laws or unwritten ordinances of the Jews, were referred back, at least some portion of them, to the time of Moses. They were regarded by the Pharisees, as of more binding obligation than the law itself. These traditions in a collected form, constitute the Talmud, divided into the *Mischna* or text, and the *Gemara* or commentary. The elders here referred to, were the celebrated ancient Jewish doctors. By *the tradition of the elders* is meant, the traditions which had come down from these ancient doctors. See 5 : 21. *For they wash not, &c.* The washing of hands before meat was made by the traditionary law a religious duty. The Pharisees regarded its omission as a crime of equal magnitude with fornication, and worthy of death. "So rigidly did the Jews observe it, that Rabbi Akiba being imprisoned, and having water scarcely sufficient to sustain life given him, preferred dying of thirst, to eating without washing his hands." Alford. They took great pains to have the hands and arms thoroughly washed. But if they had not departed from the house, the hands, with the fingers closed in the form of the fist, might be wet with water poured over them, and then elevated so that the water might flow down to the elbows, after which the water was to be poured a second time over the arms, in order that, the hands being held down, the water might flow over the fingers. It is thought that this is alluded to in Mark 7 : 3, while

3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition ?

4 For God commanded, saying,  
d Ex. 20 : 12 ; Le. 19 : 3 ; De. 5 : 16 ; Pr. 23 : 22 ;  
Ep. 6 : 2.

others refer the expression, *washing with the fist*, in that passage, to the rubbing of the hands together in this form, according to the custom of the Orientals. *Eat bread*, i. e. partake of their meals.

3. *Why do ye also transgress, &c.* Our Lord replied to this interrogation, by an inquiry, which brought out in striking light their utter disregard of God's commands, while they were such sticklers for human traditions. His method is that which he often employed, viz. to confute them on their own ground. The word rendered, *also*, implies no acknowledgment on the part of Christ, that his disciples had transgressed any other law, than the traditionary one of the Pharisees. The train of thought is, that the disciples had transgressed the traditionary law ; the Pharisees had *also* transgressed an important commandment of God. The antithesis lies in the two kinds of law here referred to. The disciples had broken the one, viz. the tradition of the elders ; the Pharisees had broken the other, that is, the commandment of God. Alford well remarks, that "this is a remarkable testimony from our Lord to the divine origin of the Mosaic law ; not merely the Decalogue as such, for the second command quoted is not in the Decalogue, and it is to be observed that where Matthew has it, "for God commanded," Mark writes, "for Moses said." *By your traditions.* Our Savior did not directly dispute against their traditions, but by his question and accompanying illustration in vs. 4-6, he demolishes the very foundation of their traditionary law, by showing how totally it is opposed to the law of God.

4. *For God commanded* (Ex. 20 : 12). This is the illustration and proof that

<sup>d</sup> Honour thy father and mother : and, 'He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.

5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to *his* father or *his* mother,  
e Ex. 21 : 17 ; Le. 20 : 9 ; De. 27 : 16 ; Pr. 20 :  
20, & 30 : 17.

they had rendered void the divine commandment by their traditions. *Honor thy father, &c.* Our Lord selected this commandment because it referred to a duty of binding obligation in the estimation of all, the respect due from children to their parents. People of every age and country, to a greater or less extent acknowledge and practise this duty. *To honor* one's parents, implies not only an outward respect and reverence, but an attention to all their wants, especially in the declining years of their life. In like manner by the force of the antithesis, *to curse* (literally *to speak evil of*) father or mother, or to revile them, is virtually the same as *to dishonor* them, by neglecting them and leaving them to want and suffering. This was the law of God, written with his finger upon a table of stone, respecting the duty of children to parents. We shall see in the next verse, how the Pharisees regarded it. *Die the death*, i. e. suffer capital punishment. Compare Ex. 21 : 17.

5. *But ye say*, by your tradition, which is here in direct opposition to God's law. *Whosoever*, i. e. any one, whatever may be his circumstances, and however aged or dependent his parents may be. *It is a gift*, literally, *a gift, that from which thou mightest have been benefited by me*, i. e. which, if it had not been thus dedicated, might have been applied to your support. Mark (7 : 11) instead of *gift*, has *corban*, i. e. consecrated to the temple worship or to the altar. Lightfoot says that the utterance of the word *corban*, did not bind the person to consecrate his property to religious uses, but only absolved him from all obligations of duty or care for his parents. It was probably declarative of the use to which at a future time, he might devote his property.



It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me ;

6 And honour not his father or his mother, *he shall be free*. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

f Ma. 7 : 11, 12.

6. *And honor not*, &c. i. e. dishonor, by depriving them of the support due to them according to God's law. *He shall be free* from all obligations to assist his parents. These words are added by the translators, to complete what they conceived to be the sense. Some critics think that, from the words, *let him die the death*, we may here supply, *let him not die the death*. Others render the clause, *and honor not*, potentially, *must also not honor*, or *must even not honor*, i. e. is released from all obligation to honor. But this is too great a departure from the literal rendering, and besides, as the clause, *and honor not*, is not found in Mark, the difficulty still remains, and some phrase must be supplied. Alford supplies the ellipsis after the preceding clause thus: Whosoever shall say to his father or mother, it is a gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, *is free*, and such a one will not honor his father or his mother. Olshausen conjectures that the future *shall honor* is a false reading, and would, therefore, substitute a tense and mood answering to *shall say*, and translate: "If any one says, what would have been yours is consecrated to the temple, he need not (he may or shall not) honor (i. e. give bodily support to) his father." But the ellipsis as filled up in our common translation, is natural and pertinent. *Thus ye have made*, &c. In how simple, concise, and irrefutable a manner did our Lord expose the hypocrisy of these Pharisees. There was no evading the force of the argument. Tradition was shown to be opposed to God's law, and there could be no doubt as to which of the two was of binding obligation. *Have ye made*, by your teachings and practice. *Of none effect*, i. e. of no binding force.

7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me.

9 But in vain they do worship

g Ma. 7 : 6. h Is. 29 : 13 ; Ez. 33 : 31.

7. The Pharisees seem to have been so confounded as to make no reply to Jesus, and he proceeds to expose still further their hypocrisy by a quotation from Isaiah 29 : 13. In Mark this reference to the prophet is placed before the verses, in which he convicts them of violating by their traditions the fifth commandment. The order of Matthew seems the more natural. *Prophecy of you*, i. e. of such persons as you. The character of the Pharisees was so like that of those to whom Isaiah prophesied, that his words might be said to have been spoken of them. The quotation is made by the way of illustration, and does not adhere to the exact words of the original, although the sense is well observed.

8. *This people draweth nigh*, &c. They approach God in the way of religious worship, with words of apparent piety. They make great professions of zeal and regard for the house of God. Their lips utter most reverential sentiments, *but their heart is far from me*. Their feelings and emotions are the very opposite of their professions. They are strict in all the outward forms and ceremonies of religion, but are strangers to its spirit and power in the heart. They are hypocrites whose profession and practice are at utter variance.

9. *But in vain*, &c. The words in this part of the quotation are an entire departure from those of the original. But if we translate the last clause of the original, as Bloomfield suggests: *their worship of me is (only) a taught commandment of men* (i. e. their religion rests only on the precepts of human teaching), the quotation will then appear to conform to the sense of the original. *In vain*, i. e. to no purpose.

me, 'teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

10 <sup>k</sup> And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand :

† Is. 29 : 13 ; Col. 2 : 18, 22 ; Ti. 1 : 14.  
‡ Ma. 7 : 14.

God looketh upon the heart, and will accept of no worship or offering which is not made in sincerity. *Do they worship me* (in this formal, hypocritical way), *teaching for doctrines* (i. e. precepts of binding obligation) the commandments of men. There is a slight difference in form, between the word here translated *commandments*, and that which denotes the commands of God, which has led some commentators to find an implied contrast between the two expressions. Except here and the corresponding passage in Mark 7 : 7, the word is only found in Col. 2 : 22, where it also denotes the commandments of men, as opposed to those of God.

10. While the Pharisees were conversing with Christ, the people stood at a respectful distance. But now as the learned doctors turn away, baffled and put to shame, our Lord calls upon the people to come near, in order that he might improve the occasion, to instruct them as to what constituted real defilement. *Hear and understand*. They were to listen with fixed and undivided attention, in order to comprehend the import of his instructions. Attention is necessary to the right understanding of a thing, although one may listen with attention and yet not understand. Our Savior here unites the two together.

11. *Which goeth into the mouth*, i. e. is received in the way of food for the stomach. The Pharisees taught that the touch of food by unwashed hands, imparted defilement to it, and thus to the body, when the food was received into the stomach. It will be remembered that food in those times, was conveyed to the mouth in the fingers, and hence the Pharisaic notion of defilement by physical contact. *Defileth*, i. e. renders ceremonially unclean.

11 'Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man ; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

12 Then came his disciples, and

‡ Ac. 10 : 15 ; Ro. 14 : 14, 17, 20 ; 1 Ti. 4 : 4 ;  
Tit. 1 : 15.

Christ does not here abrogate the law of distinction between clean and unclean articles of food, nor teach that it is a matter of no importance what a man may eat. His simple object is to show that the mind cannot be defiled in the way here mentioned. No article of food in itself has any moral impurity. Even when eaten to excess, or in violation of the Mosaic law, declaring certain animals unclean and not to be eaten, it was not the food which contaminated the man, but the heart or disposition, which led him to indulge in gluttony, or in eating that which the law pronounced unclean. In a word, the heart, and not the body, was the seat and source of moral defilement. This appears from the next clause : *but that which cometh out of the mouth*, &c. which in v. 18 is declared to be the issues of the heart.

12. *Then came his disciples*, &c. This was after the assembly had broken up, and he had entered into the house. See Mark 7 : 17. *Were offended or vexed*. They had been frustrated in their attempts to entangle our Lord, in a discussion on the validity of the ceremonial law. He did not stop to dispute this point with them, but by a well-known traditional tenet of theirs respecting the treatment of parents, he convicted them of a direct violation of God's law. The inference was obvious that their traditions were not at all obligatory, when thus arrayed against the divine law, and yet he had said nothing on which they could ground a formal accusation against him. They were therefore chagrined at their want of success in entrapping him, and at the rebuke which their hypocrisy had received in the hearing of the people. *This saying*, i. e. his reply contained in vs. 3-9 ; or perhaps the declaration in

said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this saying?

13 But he answered and said, <sup>m</sup> Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

14 Let them alone: <sup>n</sup> they be blind leaders of the blind. And

<sup>m</sup> Jn. 15: 2; 1 Co. 3: 12, &c. <sup>n</sup> Is. 9: 16; Mal. 2: 8; ch. 23: 16; Lu. 6: 39.

v. 11, as to what constituted real defilement.

13. *Every plant* refers here figuratively to the doctrines, precepts, and traditions of the Pharisees planted in the human heart. Olshausen refers it to the Pharisees personally, and this is undoubtedly true, so far as they suffered themselves to be estranged from the truth, by the adoption of false and corrupt precepts and doctrines. *Which my Father, &c.* This limits and defines these vain traditions and senseless forms of the Pharisees. That which God plants will never be eradicated from the heart of them who believe; every thing else shall be rooted up and destroyed. This was the end to which they were reserved. But what was true of these pernicious doctrines, was also true of their disseminators. They were to be rooted out and separated from God's spiritual children. Christ therefore felt no concern at their displeasure. He knew their deep-seated hypocrisy, and the fearful doom which awaited them, and therefore took no pains to provoke or avoid their censure.

14. *Let them alone.* Heed them not. Pay no regard to their threats or displeasure. This shows that the Pharisees and their corrupt doctrines are referred to, in the symbolic language of the preceding verse. *They be blind leaders* (literally, *guides, way-leaders*) of the blind (compare Rom. 2. 19). They were blind guides, and the people blindly submitted to their teaching, and the burdensome rites and ceremonies imposed on them. The consequence was seen in the proverbial expression, *if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.* The word *ditch* refers to

if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

15 <sup>o</sup> Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.

16 And Jesus said, <sup>p</sup> Are ye also yet without understanding?

17 Do not ye yet understand, that <sup>q</sup> whatsoever entereth in at

<sup>o</sup> Ma. 7: 17. <sup>p</sup> Ch. 16: 9; Ma. 7: 18.  
<sup>q</sup> 1 Co. 6: 13.

the pits or cisterns dug for the reception of rain-water. If a blind man should attempt to lead another who was also blind, across a field, in which these rain-reservoirs had been dug, the fate of both might be easily conjectured. A fearful doom is here portrayed of false religious teachers, and those who have been led astray by their instruction and example.

15. *Then answered Peter.* He spoke for his fellow disciples. See Mark 7: 17. *Declare unto us this parable,* or dark saying. See N. on 13: 35, 36. Reference is had to v. 11. The general sentiment must have been understood by Peter and his fellow-disciples, but prejudices resulting from their education, prevented their fully understanding how it was reconcilable, not with the traditions of the Pharisees, but with God's law, which pronounced a person unclean, who partook of, or even touched, the carcasses of certain animals. See Levit. 11: 8, 24-28, 31.

16. *Are ye also yet* (after so much instruction) *without understanding?* i. e. without clear and comprehensive views of the spirituality of God's law, and the great truth, that sin or moral defilement has its seat in the heart. The Sermon on the Mount ought to have opened their understanding to this great and cardinal truth. It is a work of time, however, to fully eradicate long-standing prejudices. There is a slight shade of censure, that his disciples did not understand what was addressed to the multitude (v. 11), with the command that they, who were far below the apostles in spiritual discernment, should hear and understand it.

17. The Pharisees had charged his

the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?

18 But ' those things which proceed out of the mouth come

r Ja. 3 : 6.

disciples with sin, in having eaten with unwashed hands. Our Lord here fully declares, what was indeed evident to any unprejudiced mind from his saying in v. 11, that the body, with its organs of mastication, digestion, and rejection of that which was not converted into aliment, was not the seat or source of sin. It was the heart, the seat of depraved passions, desires, and thoughts, which morally defiled a man. *Whosoever entereth in*, &c. The general idea is, that all articles of food are taken into the body, pass through it, and are cast forth into the draught or privy, without coming at all in contact with the mind or soul of man. The only contact was physical, and could produce, therefore, no mental or moral pollution.

18. *Out of the mouth* is antithetic to the words, *in at the mouth*, in the preceding verse, and is put here for any external act indicative of moral character. It does not follow, however, that a man is not equally defiled by wicked thoughts and desires, which are concealed in the heart from every human eye, and never find any utterance or external manifestation. But that which proceedeth out of the mouth is an evidence of the state of the heart, and is said to defile the man, by thus being an index of the moral pollution within.

19. This verse explains and confirms the sentiment of the preceding one. *Evil thoughts*. Unless we take this in the sense of *evil* or *false reasonings* arising from a perverted mind, a sense which the context justifies us in giving it, we must consider it as put generically, for the more special classification of the evil acts which follow. In the catalogue of these, the order is somewhat changed in Mark, and other specifications are added. *Murders*. Not only the overt act, but anger, malice, revenge, and all other states of the

mind, contrary to the spirit of the sixth commandment. See 5 : 21-26. *Adulteries*. See N. on 5 : 27-32. *Fornications*. This refers to all acts of lewdness, and to all unchaste desires (see 5 : 28). *Thefts*. In connection with this Mark adds *covetousness*; literally, *covetous thoughts, plans of fraud*, the great exciting cause of the violation of the eighth commandment. The spirit of this commandment is opposed to the appropriation to our own use, of any thing, however valueless, which belongs to another. Some people reason falsely that there is no sin in taking from one who has an abundance, some trifle which will not be missed. It may not be missed by the owner, but God has seen the act, and pronounces it a *theft*, proceeding from an evil heart, and defiling the soul with guilt. Nor does His eye behold only the overt act of theft. He sees every covetous desire, as it goes forth and rests upon the property of others, and pronounces it the issue of a wicked and corrupt heart. He demands in us a contented disposition, freedom from envy, a faithful regard for the interest of others, in every thing intrusted to our keeping or falling within our reach. *False witness*. This is also put generically not only for false testimony in courts of justice, but for every species of fraud, deception, and falsehood. One of the most universal sins of our race is here referred to. It besets childhood, and unless judiciously and thoroughly eradicated, takes such deep root in the soul, as to be the besetting sin of one's whole life. It makes its appearance in various forms. With some persons a malicious pleasure seems to be taken in spreading slanderous and mischievous reports, "scattering fire-brands, arrows, and death." In others, it results from a want of moral courage to tell the truth. It sometimes proceeds from a habit of exaggeration, in-

19 ' For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, &c. 6 : 5, & 8 : 21; Pr. 6 : 14; Je. 17 : 9; Ma. 7 : 21.



teries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies :

20 These are *the things* which defile a man : but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

advertently formed, but not less tenacious and destructive of confidence between man and man. Men rightly conclude that he who tells a falsehood, to give fulness or point to a story, will not hesitate to do so when prompted thereto by self-interest. A violation of truth may be found in promises carelessly made, but not fulfilled, conventional forms of polite prevarication, false impressions conveyed in language so adroitly framed, as to contain no verbal falsehood, and in signs, gestures, and even silence itself. Against all these forms the commandment of God, "Thou shalt not bear false witness," is opposed. When seen by his eye, they indicate a corrupt heart, out of which proceeds that which defiles the soul. *Blasphemy*. This refers to detraction, railing, reviling, and the whole category of evil speaking. Mark places this after what he calls *an evil eye*, i. e. envy. The envious person is quite apt to indulge in evil speaking, and the two sins are well put in juxtaposition. What a sweep of condemnation is here made of much, which is denominated "small talk," and regarded by many as innocent scandal. Mark adds to this catalogue of Matthew, besides those we have noticed, *lasciviousness*, which may be referred to looseness of language, or any intemperance of conduct, leading to the great sins of adultery and fornication, *wickedness* (literally, *wickednesses*, i. e. wicked plans, purposes, and counsels), *pride*, and *foolishness*. The sins here enumerated, are all violations of the second Table. If to them we add the rebellious and evil thoughts against God, which issue from the heart, how overwhelming must be the conviction of the deep depravity of our nature, and the impossibility of being purified, except by the blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sin.

21 ¶ Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

22 And behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same

† Ma. 7 : 24.

20. *These are the things*, &c. Mark adds, "which come from within." This is an emphatic repetition of what was asserted in v. 18. *But to eat*, &c. See N. on v. 11.

21-28. THE DAUGHTER OF THE SYRO-PHENICIAN WOMAN IS HEALED. *Region of Tyre and Sidon*. Mark 7 : 24-30.

21. *Then Jesus went thence*, &c. He seems to have left Galilee in order to avoid Herod, who had taken up a temporary residence in that province, and whose attention had been particularly turned to Jesus at that time. See 14 : 1-2. Alford thinks that he retired from Galilee, to avoid the present indignation of the Pharisees. *Into the coasts*, &c. Mark : "unto the borders," or confines. See N. on Mark 7 : 24. It has been a matter of doubt with many commentators, whether Jesus actually entered the Gentile territory. Those who think he did not, give to the preposition translated *into*, the sense of *toward*. It would seem, however, from the face of the whole passage, that our Lord did really enter the borders of this Gentile country, although not to heal or to preach, but only to find a safe retreat from the storm of persecution.

22. *A woman of Canaan*, i. e. a Phœnician woman. Mark (7 : 26) calls her "a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation," on which see Note. She was evidently a Gentile by birth, although some think she was a proselyte. However this may have been, it is evident that she was not at this time an idolatress, but a believer in God. It is quite probable that she shared with the Jews in the expectation of the Messiah, and that she had heard of Jesus ; for so full was the region of his fame that, according to Mark, while he would have no man know that he had entered into a house, he could not be hid. *Came out of the same coasts*. The proper order of the words is ; *A Canaanitish woman of the*

coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, *thou* son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came

and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24 But he answered and said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25 Then came she and worshipped  
u Ch. 10:5, 6; Ac. 3; 25, 26, & 13:46; Ro. 15:8

*same coasts* (i. e. belonging to the same region which he was visiting) *came out* of her house or village. *And said unto him.* Her distress for her daughter, and confidence in the power of Jesus to heal, excited her to such a degree that, regardless of the multitude, she called aloud upon him for help. He had as yet performed no miracle in these parts, and this renders her faith and perseverance the more remarkable. *Have mercy on me, &c.* See N. on 9:27. She had doubtless heard from the Jews, that the Messiah was to be of the line of David. This address did not, therefore, imply any supernatural communication to her of this truth. As the father of the lunatic, in Mark 9:22, said, "have compassion on *us* and help *us*," so this woman makes her daughter's affliction her own, and exclaims, "have mercy on *me*, &c. *Grievously vexed, &c.* See N. on 4:24. This was a possession of more than ordinary violence.

23. *But he answered her not a word.* He took no notice of her. It was thus that he tried the faith of the blind man (9:27), who followed him with the same importunate cry for help. The sequel shows that his heart was all the while full of kindness and compassion. *Besought him*; literally, *inquired of him*, which, by a Hebrew idiom, takes the sense to *entreat, ask a favor. Send her away*, i. e. either grant or deny her request and dismiss her. The granting her request, however, was predominant in their minds, from the well-known habit of Jesus, to refuse assistance to none who came to him for relief; and also his answer to them implies this, for he gives as a reason why he cannot consistently help her, that it does not comport with the immediate object of his

mission. *She crieth after us*, i. e. she follows us with her cries. Jesus was passing along the way, when this woman came forth, but soon after, as it appears from Mark, he entered into a house for the sake of concealment. Hither also she came and preferred her request, as detailed in v. 25, where Mark's account commences. This harmonizes the two statements. The disciples feared lest, by her cries, the attention of the people would be directed to them, and the purpose of concealment, for which they had come, frustrated. But it was great presumption in them, after what they had seen of his power and wisdom, to direct him, as to what it was proper to do on this occasion.

24. *I am not sent, &c.* See Ns. on 10:5, 6. The immediate mission of our Savior was to the Jews. The time for the dispensation of the gospel and its privileges to the Gentiles, had not yet come. Christ as Mediator, was officially subordinate to the Father, and therefore here and elsewhere speaks of himself, as being sent on this mission into the world. See N. on 11:27. *But unto the lost sheep*, i. e. to none but the lost sheep, &c.

25. *Then came she.* In the extremity of her distress, she is emboldened to come into his presence, and prefer her suit so directly, as to give him no opportunity of evading it any longer. Jesus was now in the house (see N. on v. 23), and it is quite probable that she pressed her way in, against the will of the disciples, who would be likely to interpret their Master's reply in v. 24, as a virtual denial of the woman's request. *And worshipped him.* See N. on 2:11. *Lord, help me.* What words more simple and appropriate

ped him, saying, Lord, help me.

26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the chil-

dren's bread, and to cast *it* to <sup>z</sup> dogs.

27 And she said, Truth, Lord:

z Ch. 7 : 6 ; Phi. 3 : 2.

could be uttered by a mother in behalf of a suffering child, and to a Being of such power and condescending love, as the one in whose presence she then stood.

26. It would seem that this woman's faith and perseverance had been sufficiently tested, but Jesus subjected it to a still further trial, in order to illustrate its power, and render it an example worthy of being imitated to the end of time. *It is not meet*, i. e. not right, proper. *The children's bread*, i. e. bread or food intended for the children. Our Lord was well understood by the woman, as referring to the Jews, who being heirs of the promises, and inheritors of his covenant blessings, claimed to be God's children. It is here used in this general acceptation, but Paul in Rom. 9 : 6-8 declares that none but the children of the promise are to be accounted true Israelites or children of God. See also Gal. 3 : 7. *And to cast it to dogs*; literally, *little dogs*, the diminutive implying the familiarity with which household dogs, especially such as are very tame and affectionate, are addressed. The epithet *dog* was quite commonly bestowed upon the Gentiles by the Jews. It was afterwards reversed, and *dog of a Jew* was the common epithet, by which persons of that despised race were addressed for many centuries in Europe. Our Savior employed this expression as one in common vogue, for the purpose of rendering more severe the trial, to which he was subjecting this woman's faith. The general sentiment is this: The Jewish nation, who are peculiarly the children of God, and with whom are his ordinances and true worship, are in need of all the spiritual gifts and healing mercies, which I can personally bestow. Their interests ought not to be overlooked. They are the children and must first be fed (Mark 7 : 27). Their food must not be given to the

Gentiles, who have no more claim to share their repast, than the dogs to eat bread with their master's children. The idea of some, that by *children* Jesus meant the woman, and by *dogs* the unbelieving Jews, and that this was addressed to the disciples in the general sense, "shall I not help a woman of such faith? Is she not one of God's real children, from whom the food ought not to be taken, to be given to cavilling hypocrites like most of the Jewish nation?" is entitled to no consideration. The whole scope of the passage is against it. The woman replied to it, as being directed in the way of reproach to herself. The apparent harshness of our Lord's remark disappears, however, if we consider him as employing terms in common use, expressive of the estimation in which the Jews held their Gentile neighbors, without sanctioning at all the practice of using opprobrious epithets, or implying that the Gentiles by nature were worse than the Jews.

27. *Truth, Lord*, i. e. what you say, Lord, is true. I acknowledge that I am fit to be classed only with the dogs. *Yet the dogs*; literally, *for even the dogs*, there being implied a previous ellipsis of some phrase as this: (yet deny not my request) *for even the dogs*, &c. She adroitly brings to view the attachment which a man feels for his faithful dog, and the provision made for his wants, from the well-spread table of the children, and thus derives from the very reason given by Jesus why he should deny her request, an argument why it should be granted. What could be more beautiful and prudent than her reply? Luther who, in the words of Trench, "seems never weary of extolling the mighty faith of this woman," exclaims of this reply of hers, "Was not that a master stroke? She snares Christ in his own words." *The crumbs which fall*. Not pieces of bread, as some

yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour

γ Ma. 7: 31.    ζ Ch. 4: 13.

think, on which the hands are wiped while eating, but small crumbs, which accidentally fall, and are quickly snatched up by the dog, whose privilege it is to remain at such times under the table. *Their masters'*, not the Jews, as some have strangely thought, for they are represented by *the children*, but God himself, the plural form being used to accord with the plural *dogs*, they being supposed to have many masters.

28. *O woman, great is thy faith.* The faith of this Syrophenician woman had been tested in a very severe manner. She had cried after Jesus by the way, but received no encouraging reply or look. The disciples having become wearied with her clamorous importunity, and seeing that she would not otherwise go away, impatiently asked their Master to dismiss her. His reply, if it reached her ears, as it doubtless did, was any thing but encouraging, yet she pressed her way into the house, and prostrating herself before Jesus, uttered those touching words, *Lord, help me.* Even there she was repulsed, but instead of giving up in despair, or taking offence at the odious term by which she, as a Gentile, had been referred to, with a readiness and tact, which show her mind to have been of no common order, converts our Lord's reply into one of the strongest arguments that relief should be granted her. No wonder that our Savior exclaimed, *great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt*, i. e. thy request is granted. There is, perhaps, no stronger instance of the power and triumph of faith to be found in the record of God's word, than is

29 ¶ And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there.

30 <sup>a</sup> And great multitudes came unto him, having with them *those that were* lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and

a Is. 35: 5, 6; ch. 11: 5; Lu. 7: 22.

furnished in the incident here related. The words of our Lord as given in Mark, are very remarkable: *For this saying go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy daughter*, as though her reply in v. 27, was the great and crowning triumph of her faith, which constituted the principal ground of her acceptance. *From that very hour.* See Ns. on 9: 22; Mark 7: 30.

29-38. A DEAF AND DUMB MAN HEALED; ALSO MANY OTHERS. FOUR THOUSAND ARE FED. *Decapolis.* Mark 7: 31-37: 8: 1-9.

29. *And Jesus departed from thence*, i. e. from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. He does not appear to have tarried long in that region, and the only incident relating to his visit, is the one just given in vs. 21-28. *Nigh unto the sea of Tiberias.* He returned through Galilee, but did not tarry there, through fear of Herod, but passed on to Decapolis (Mark 7: 31), which was without his jurisdiction. See N. on 4: 25. *Into a mountain*; literally, *the mountain*, i. e. the mountainous ridge environing the lake. This was a favorable position, both for addressing the people who occupied the slopes below, and from its being a comparatively still and secluded place. *Sat down there* to teach the people. See N. on 5: 1.

30. *Great multitudes, &c.* His fame had before filled that region (4: 25), and now, on his coming thither, the people gathered around him in great numbers, to be healed, and to listen to his words of instruction. At this time the deaf mute, spoken of in Mark 7: 32-36, was healed. *Maimed*; literally, *bent, crooked.* As this word, in



cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them :

31 Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see : and they glorified the God of Israel.

32 <sup>b</sup> Then Jesus called his

*b* Ma. 8 : 1.

its present connection, must differ from the one rendered *lame*, and as the translation *maimed* (i. e. wanting some member of the body), is not the exact rendering, it is better to refer it to those whose arms, hands, legs, or feet had become crooked and useless by disease, or had been so from birth. Bowlegged, club-footed persons, and all such as suffered from similar malformation, would come within its definition, and the cure of such was a great exhibition of our Savior's power. *Many others* who were diseased. *Cast them down at Jesus' feet*, i. e. brought them before him and laid them down to be healed. The expression does not denote neglect or abandonment, but haste, and the natural desire, in such crowds, to be first in obtaining that which was sought.

31. *The multitude wondered.* It is evident from the enumeration, that there were many persons healed on this occasion, and of a great variety of diseases. *The dumb*; literally, *the dull, blunted*, reference being had to those deprived of both hearing and speech. It is well known that persons born deaf, or who become so at an early age, are also dumb. *To be whole*; literally, *sound, healthy, well.* *They glorified, &c.* See N. on 9 : 8. *God of Israel*, i. e. the Being whom the people of Israel worshipped, and whose protection they had experienced. It is strange that Trench should think from these words, that of those present a great number were heathens. Nothing was more common, as every reader of the Old Testament will see, than for the Israelites themselves to speak of Jehovah, as being the God of Israel.

disciples *unto him*, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat : and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.

33 <sup>c</sup> And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so

*c* 2 Ki. 4 : 43.

32. *Then Jesus called, &c.* The disciples were probably dispersed among the multitude, to further the benevolent designs of their Master. Perhaps, however, nothing more is meant than that he called their attention to what he was about to communicate. *I have compassion.* See N. on 9 : 36. *Because they continue with me now three days.* According to the most approved reading of the original, a literal translation would be *three days (are) now to them staying with me*, i. e. they have stayed with me now three days. The sense does not differ from that of our common version. The people took their repose for two nights in the open field. As it was just after the passover, the season was pleasant, and no injury to health was incurred. *Have nothing to eat.* Their temporary supply of food was now exhausted. *I will not send them away fasting.* They had probably consumed most, if not all, their food, on the first and second days, but, being unwilling to leave Jesus, they remained another day; forgetful of their temporal wants, in the wonders of love and mercy, with which his ministrations were attended.

33. *And his disciples say, &c.* The apparent impossibility of supplying the wants of this great multitude, so possessed their minds, that they seem to have forgotten that on a previous occasion, in circumstances almost similar, he had miraculously fed five thousand. Hence we see the wisdom of repeating this great miracle. *In the wilderness*, far off from places where provisions could be purchased.

34. *How many loaves have ye?* The

much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?

34 And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes.

35 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.

36 And <sup>d</sup> he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and <sup>e</sup> gave thanks, and brake *them*, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

*d* Ch. 14: 19. *e* 1 Sa. 9: 13; Lu. 22: 19.  
*f* Ma. 8: 10.

same question which he proposed on the previous occasion. See Mark 6: 38. *They said seven.* Although there were more loaves, and a less number of persons to be fed than on the previous occasion, yet the quantity of food was so inadequate to the wants of the multitude, that the miracle was no less grand and striking than the preceding one. Some German critics have maintained, that this miracle is identical with the feeding of the five thousand related in 14: 15-21. But not to speak of minor points of difference, which forbid the idea of such identity, the reference by our Lord himself, in 16: 9-10, to two distinct miracles, is a sufficient confutation of such a notion. It is also worthy of note, that the baskets in this second miraculous repast, were of a smaller kind than those mentioned before, and have a different name given them by Matthew and Mark, from the name given those used on the former occasion, which was the same in all the Evangelists. This same distinction in the name of the baskets, is observed in our Lord's reference to the miracles (16: 9-10), and is almost proof positive that they were two distinct and separate miracles. It is well said by Olshausen, in reference to De Wette's idea, that this miracle is a repetition of the first fact handed down from tradition, that had this been so, the second miracle would have been related in more exag-

37 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets full.

38 And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.

39 <sup>f</sup> And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.

#### CHAPTER XVI.

**T**HE <sup>a</sup> Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempt-

*a* Ch. 12: 38; Ma. 8: 11; Lu. 11: 16, & 12: 54-56; 1 Co. 1: 22.

generated language; whereas the number fed was less, the number of loaves from which they were fed, larger, and the quantity of fragments taken up, smaller, than at the previous miracle of feeding the five thousand.

35. *And he commanded, &c.* The orderly preparation for the repast, which was the same as before (14: 19), made the miracle more prominent and impressive. As the five thousand sat down by hundreds and by fifties, it is probable that the four thousand sat in the same general order.

36, 37. *And he took, &c.* See Ns. on 14: 19-20.

38. *Four thousand men, &c.* On the same principle referred to in N. on 14: 21, we may suppose the whole number fed on this occasion, to have been not less than eight thousand.

39. *And he sent away, &c.* According to his intention of bringing the meeting to a close (see v. 32). *Magdala.* This place formerly was called Migdol (see Josh 19: 38). It lay on the western shore of the lake, some three miles north of Tiberias. It is now a village of only a few miserable huts. Dalmanutha, to which Mark refers, was a village near Magdala.

#### CHAPTER XVI.

1-4. THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES AGAIN REQUIRE A SIGN. *Near Magdala.* Mark 8: 10-12.

ing desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.

2 He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be fair weather*: for the sky is red.

3 And in the morning, *It will be foul weather to-day*: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face

b Ch. 12 : 39.

1. The event here spoken of probably took place soon after he landed from the ship. See Mark 8 : 11. The Pharisees and Sadducees, although bitterly at variance, seem to have united, on this occasion, in attempting to ensnare our Lord. They pretended to an honest desire to see some sign from heaven, which would remove all doubt as to his Messiahship. It was a repetition of their request in 12 : 38 ; Luke 11 : 16. *Tempting him*. This denotes the purpose of their request. *A sign from heaven*. See N. on 12 : 38.

2. *He answered and said*. The reply of our Savior is based on the clear and abundant proofs, he had already given them of his divine mission. Had they been as wise to see and acknowledge these signs, as they were to prognosticate the weather from the appearance of the sky, they would have required no further evidence, but would at once have received him. *When it is evening*. See N. on 14 : 15. *It will be fair weather*; literally, *fair weather* (to-morrow). *Is red*, i. e. has a dry, fiery appearance.

3. *In the morning*, i. e. between dawn and sunrise. *Red and lowering*, i. e. of a heavy, dark-red appearance. *O ye hypocrites*. See N. on 6 : 2. Their desire for a more convincing sign, was a mere pretence to find some occasion against him. *Ye can discern*, &c. Ye can prognosticate the weather from the appearance of the sky. Lightfoot finds many examples, showing that the Jews were given to prognosticating the weather of the coming season. *The signs of the times*, i. e. the evidences of our Lord's Messiahship, in his miracles and

of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?

4. A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

5 ¶ And when his disciples

c Ma. 8 : 14.

doctrine. The word *times* refers to the appointed time for the appearance of Christ on earth. The Old Testament prophecies marked with sufficient clearness the signs of those times, so that no one, through pretended ignorance of them, would be justified in rejecting the Messiah. The life and character of Jesus Christ, and his abundant miraculous powers, so clearly corresponded to the Messianic predictions, that it evinced the extremest blindness of heart in face of such evidence to reject him.

4. *A wicked and adulterous generation*. See N. on 12 : 39. Mark in the parallel passage (8 : 12) says, that he sighed deeply in spirit at their unbelief and hardness of heart, which led them to cavil at his claims, and demand a further sign of his Messiahship. *The sign of the prophet Jonas*. He repeats this reference to Jonas, both to give it emphasis, and stop the mouths of those wicked men. They repeated their demand for a sign from heaven, he repeats his reply, that there shall no sign be given them, but one from the depths below, even the sign of the prophet Jonas. *And he left them and departed*. He was filled with such holy indignation at their hypocrisy and hardness of heart, that without deigning to hold further conversation with them, he abruptly left them, and again embarked on board the ship (Mark 8 : 13), and departed to the north-eastern side of the lake, to the northern Bethsaida. See Ns. on 11 : 21 ; 14 : 13.

5-12. THE DISCIPLES CAUTIONED AGAINST THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARI-

were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.

6 Then Jesus said unto them, <sup>d</sup> Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

*d* Lu. 12: 1.

SEES. *N. E. coast of the Lake of Galilee.* Mark 8: 13-21.

5. *They had forgotten, &c.* This refers to the necessary supplies, which through forgetfulness they had neglected to take with them. Mark says that they had but one loaf, and as the country in that quarter was sparsely settled (see 14: 15), to obtain a supply of provisions there, would be attended with some difficulty. Hence when they reached the place of their destination, and were about to proceed on their land journey, they manifested some concern, at their forgetfulness in not taking the requisite food with them.

6. *Then Jesus said, &c.* They had openly expressed their concern, or Jesus, in the exercise of his omniscience, knew what was passing in their minds. He took occasion from their anxiety in respect to their bodily wants, to warn them against the doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees. These he characterized as leaven, silently and insidiously pervading and vitiating the whole spiritual man, and destroying every pure and holy emotion. *Take heed and beware.* An emphatic injunction to give the most earnest attention. *Leaven.* We are told in v. 12, that under this metaphor, reference was had to the doctrine of the sects here mentioned. The word in itself may be used both of true and false doctrines, the silent and pervading influence and diffusive power of leaven constituting the point of the simile. Many of the doctrines of the Pharisees were true and scriptural, yet were so mingled with corrupt and vain traditions, that, as a whole, they might well be likened to moral leaven of the most pernicious kind. In Luke 12: 1, on a different occasion, our Lord uses this metaphor

VOL. I.—9\*

7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have taken no bread.

8 *Which* when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among your-

to denote the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. *And of the Sadducees.* In Mark (8: 15), the equivalent of these words is, "the leaven of Herod," on which see Note.

7. *They reasoned among themselves.* They debated this matter privately with one another. Thus they doubtless often talked of the incidents and instructions of the day, and pondered over things which seemed to them strange and obscure. Sometimes in such cases, they resorted to Jesus for light. See 13: 10, 36; 15: 15; 16: 10; Mark 7: 17. *It is because, &c.* They supposed that he referred to physical food, and that his caution was a virtual prohibition against partaking of their bread, as though it were polluted. Such an injunction doubtless appeared to them strange, but they were so prone to regard his sayings in a temporal light, that they had no idea that he referred to the doctrines of these sects.

8. *Which when Jesus perceived.* Their secret thoughts and private reasonings were all known to him. *O ye of little faith.* See N. on 6: 30. *Why reason ye, &c.* After the stupendous display of our Lord's creative power in feeding thousands of persons from a few loaves and fishes, it showed not only great forgetfulness, but a want of faith in them to betray such anxiety about their temporal wants. Our Savior also manifests his surprise, that they should suppose him to refer to so comparatively unimportant a subject, as the procuring of bread (see John 4: 32, 34). Their dullness of apprehension is most emphatically referred to in Mark: "Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? having eyes, see ye not? and having ears



selves, because ye have brought no bread?

9 <sup>e</sup> Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

10 <sup>f</sup> Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake *it* not to

*e* Ch. 14 : 17; John 6 : 9.

hear ye not? and do you not remember?" These reiterated inquiries show the depth of his astonishment, at their having so mistaken his meaning.

12. *Then understood they, &c.* They were now sensible of their mistake. They had been taught a twofold lesson, not to distrust a watchful Providence, and to realize how transcendently important it was, to have correct doctrinal views in respect to the duties and obligations of religion. The comparative worth of the bread that perisheth, and that which endureth to everlasting life, was also impressed upon their minds on this occasion.

13. PETER AND THE REST AGAIN PROFESS THEIR FAITH IN CHRIST. *Region of Cesarea Philippi.* Mark 8 : 27-30; Luke 9 : 18-21.

13. *When Jesus came, &c.* On his way to this region, he passed through the northern Bethsaida, where according to Mark (8 : 22-26), he healed a blind man by spitting on his eyes, and putting his hands upon him. *Cesarea Philippi* was a city of Upper Galilee, near the sources of the Jordan, at the foot of Mount Hermon. It was the ancient Laish or Dan. Judg. 18 : 7, 29. It was rebuilt by Philip the tetrarch, and named in honor of himself and Tiberius Cæsar. It is now called Panias or Banias. It is conspicuous in our Lord's history, as being the place, in the vicinity of which he first foretold his own death and resurrection, and the trials and sufferings of his followers. The transfiguration was also

you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

12 Then understood they how that he bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

13 ¶ When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he

*f* Ch. 15 : 34.

probably on a mountain near the place. The Cæsarea referred to in Acts, lay on the Mediterranean coast. *He asked his disciples.* Mark (3 : 27) says that he proposed this question to them by the way. There is no discrepancy between the accounts, as the conversation may have taken place as they were passing along, after having come into the region here spoken of. There is no necessity of amending the common translation of Matthew, which adheres correctly to the aoristic force of the participle. Luke (9 : 18) says that he was praying at this time. This would seem to indicate, that he and his disciples had paused a short time by the way, in order to rest from the fatigue of the journey, which opportunity our Lord improved in devotion and religious conversation. *Whom do men say, &c.* Some commentators give this turn to the question: *Whom do men say that I am? the Son of man?* This, besides being a harsh and forced construction, is forbidden by the answer of the disciples, which in that case, must have been a simple affirmative or negative. Equally unsatisfactory is Olshausen's rendering and explanation: *I who am* (as you are aware) *the Son of Man*; which he thinks led the disciples forward to the idea of *Son of God*. But Alford well remarks, that "this would destroy the simplicity of the following question, But whom say ye that I am? because it would put into their mouths the answer intended to be given." There are some who reject the pronoun *I*,

asked his disciples, saying, <sup>g</sup>Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?

14 And they said, <sup>h</sup>Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jere-

<sup>g</sup> Ma. 8 : 27 ; Lu. 19 : 18.

<sup>h</sup> Ch. 14 : 2 ; Lu. 9 : 7, 8, 9.

which is wanting in some versions, and translate: Whom do men suppose the Son of man to be? in which case, they make *Son of man* to correspond with *I*, in v. 15. But this would demand some such answer as: Some say that John the Baptist is the Son of man, some Elias, &c. In that case, *Son of man* would refer to the Forerunner of the Son of God or the Messiah, which is inadmissible. The common reading and translation is the correct one, and against it can be advanced no valid objections. The evident scope of the inquiry is the opinion entertained by the people of Jesus himself. The question is put directly in v. 15, and to the form as there given, the answers in v. 14 correspond, showing that the question in this verse is the same as that in v. 15. In the parallel passages of Mark and Luke, the question corresponds with that given by Matthew, the words "Son of man" being omitted.

14. It appears from this reply of the disciples, that while the opinions of the people respecting our Savior were various, all agreed that he was the reappearance, by bodily resurrection, of John the Baptist, or some Old Testament prophet. *Elias* was to be the forerunner of the Messiah. *Jeremias*, accounted by the Jews, according to Lightfoot, the first in the prophetic canon, and styled by way of eminence, *the prophet of God*. *One of the prophets*, i. e. some one of the Old Testament prophets.

15. *But whom say ye*, &c. Our Savior led the disciples by these questions, to a true understanding of his character and mission. It was not that he himself was ignorant of the estimation in which he was held by the people, that he proposed these inquiries, but that he might take occasion from the confession of his disciples as to his Mes-

siah, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

<sup>i</sup> Ch. 14 : 33 ; Ma. 8 : 29 ; Lu. 9 : 20 ; John 6 : 69, & 11 : 27 ; Ac. 8 : 37, & 9 : 20 ; 1 Jo. 4 : 15, & 5 : 5 ; He. 1 : 2, 5.

siahship, to enlighten them in respect to the real object of his mission, viz. to die for the sins of the world. At this point, according to Alford, begins the *second great division* of our Savior's ministry on earth, introductory to his sufferings and death.

16. *Simon Peter answered*. As the oldest and leading disciple, he responded for the rest. We are not to suppose that he was the only one of the Twelve, who had attained to the conviction that Jesus was the Messiah. They had often, doubtless, talked among themselves of the wondrous miracles and sublime teachings of their Master, and had long ere this attained to the full conviction, that he was the Christ, promised and foretold in the Old Testament. The fact that Peter acted as spokesman for the rest, should be kept in mind, as it is the key to the right interpretation of the controverted passage which follows. *Thou art the Christ* (himself, and not as the people think, his forerunner), *the Son*, &c. Mark the directness and promptness of Peter's reply, as coming from the depths of his heart, *thou art*, not, *I say that thou art*, as the form of the question required. Whitby supposes that there is a difference between *Christ* and *the Son of the living God*, the former referring to his office, the latter to his divine origin. It is better, however, to regard the latter as designed to give fullness and emphasis to the word *Christ*. God is said to be the *living God*, in contradistinction from idol deities, and as the author of life and its blessings. See John 6 : 69 ; Acts 8 : 37 ; 9 : 20 ; 1 John 4 : 15 ; 5 : 5. Peter's confession was full, clear, and explicit, bringing out the twofold nature of Christ as born of man, and yet the Son of God, as both human and divine—a view so much in

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona: <sup>k</sup> for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto

<sup>k</sup> Ep. 2 : 8.    <sup>l</sup> 1 Co. 2 : 10; Ga. 1 : 16.

advance of the Jewish conception of the Messiah, that our Lord declares it to have been communicated to him by a revelation from heaven.

17. *Blessed art thou*, i. e. blessed of God in his revelation of so glorious a truth to thee. *Bar-jona*, i. e. son of Jonas. The prefix *Bar*, is a Hebrew word signifying *son*, and is found in several of the New Testament names as Barabbas, Bartholomew, Barjesus, &c. The name of Peter is fully given both by way of emphatic address, and to contrast his earthly relationship and extraction, with the high degree of spiritual illumination and blessedness, resulting from the revelation here referred to; or as Olshausen thinks, to form a contrast to the foregoing "Son of God." *Flesh and blood* (compare Gal. 1 : 15, 16). These words are put by circumlocution for *man*, as composed of flesh and blood, and hence are used metaphorically to denote the weakness and frailty of human nature. As opposed to the words, *my Father*, in the next clause, it denotes man as an erring, sinful being, naturally blind to every thing spiritual. *Hath not revealed it*, i. e. hath not discovered it, or made it known. "Man looketh on the outward appearance" (1 Sam. 16 : 7), and would never, in the light of his own reason, have discerned, under the mean exterior of Jesus of Nazareth, his divine Sonship. The verb *hath revealed* is to be supplied in the next clause, but not in the sense of a special communication or revelation from heaven, but to the conviction wrought in Peter's mind of his Master's Messiahship, by his miracles and doctrines. This mental illumination and conviction was, nevertheless, the result of the divine influence upon his heart, by which his Jewish prejudices were removed, and his mind enlightened and opened to conviction.

thee, but 'my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That <sup>m</sup> thou art Peter, and <sup>n</sup> upon

<sup>m</sup> John 1 : 42.    <sup>n</sup> Ep. 2 : 20; Re. 21 : 14.

18. *And I also say unto thee*. As thou hast borne such correct testimony to my true character, I likewise say unto thee *that thou art Peter*, i. e. thou art all which was implied in that prophetic name, which I gave thee at Jordan (see John 1 : 42). *Peter* was the Greek of *Cephas*, a rock. It was intended to denote the energy and boldness, which our Savior saw to be characteristic of that disciple. His frank and fearless confession of the Messiahship of Jesus, comported with the signification of his name, and our Lord doubtless referred, in the words *thou art Peter*, to the strength and energy of his faith and zeal for his Master's honor, which his reply evinced. *And upon this rock*. The word *petra*, here translated *rock*, has the generic sense, a mass, or ledge of rock, and is never used in the signification of *petros* (Peter), a single stone. It is employed here, not only to distinguish the word from *petros*, the proper name in *thou art Peter*, but as more contemporaneous with the idea of *foundation*, which in the case of edifices designed to be durable, was composed, if possible, of the living rock (see 7 : 24). By a play of words, quite common in the sacred writers, our Lord said, *thou art Peter* (a rock of firmness), *and upon this rock* (i. e. the rock-like firmness of Peter's character, manifested in his prompt and open confession of faith, and still further to be developed in his energy and boldness in planting the infant church) *I will build* (or establish) *my church*. This seems to me to be the sense of this much controverted passage. Peter was the first to preach the gospel to the Jews (Acts 2 : 14), and afterwards to the Gentiles (Acts 10 : 34). His forwardness, zeal, and boldness are represented under the figure of a rock, suggested to our Lord's mind by the name *Peter*, which he had himself given him. Upon this

this rock I will build my church; and ° the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

o Job 33: 17; Ps. 9: 13, & 107: 18; Is. 38: 10.

rock, that is through the agency of this devoted apostle, he was to build up and establish his church. That *petra*, *rock*, in this verse refers to Peter, and not to the confession of faith which he had just made, or as some think to the Savior himself, there can be no question. But it refers to him, not so much in his person, as in his natural boldness and ardent temperament, on account of which he had previously received from Christ, the name *Peter*. Hence every one who has Peter's fidelity, zeal, and boldness, shares, in a measure, with him the honor of being a stone in the spiritual edifice, "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone" (Eph. 2: 20). He is a living stone, not so prominent it is true as the apostle, nor in the order of time, underlying the edifice so near the great foundation-stone, but yet essential to the beauty, harmony, and general effect of the building. Such living stones are the only legitimate successors of Peter, the only true inheritors of the blessing, pronounced upon him by our Lord Jesus Christ. Olshausen, who refers the foundation-rock to Peter's confession of faith, virtually adopts the above explanation, when he says, "the explanation, that the faith of Peter and the confession of that faith is the rock, is entirely the correct one, only the faith itself, and his confession of it, must not be regarded apart from Peter himself personally." It would be better to reverse this and say, that Peter himself personally is referred to, but not apart from his faith and the confession of it, which he had so promptly and boldly made. *The gates of hell*, i. e. the powers of darkness, the opposition to the church by Satan, carried on through the agency of wicked men. Some think this phrase to mean the *entrance to the grave*, viz. death, the

19 <sup>p</sup> And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt

p Ch. 18: 18; Jno. 20: 23.

idea being that death itself shall not prevail over the true members of Christ's church, but that they shall attain to a happy resurrection. This is true of the pious dead, but is not taught directly in the passage before us. In ancient times, business of all kinds was transacted in the gates which led into the city or palace, and hence these gates are tropically put for the persons, who are there congregated for business. Especially was this true of the king or ruler, who either personally, or by his ministers, gave audience in the gate to his subjects, and decided such points of dispute as were referred to him. So now the term, "Sublime Porte" or Lofty Gate, is employed to designate the court or government of the Turkish Sultan. Here the passage evidently refers to the enemies of the church, the court of Satan, the great foe of God and man. *Hades*, translated *hell*, properly refers to the abodes of the dead, the grave, the invisible or lower world (see N. on 11: 23), but is here put for the place, or prison, where are confined the powers of evil. *Shall not prevail*; literally, *shall not overpower*. The word implies a great struggle for supremacy, and the victory is declared to be on the side of the church. This promise has been confirmed thus far in the history of Christianity, and will be fully verified in the great and final consummation spoken of in 1 Cor. 15: 24-28.

19. *And I will give unto thee*. Peter had acted as spokesman for the disciples, in replying to a question put to all of them, "*Whom say ye that I am?*" Our Lord, therefore, addressed to him, personally, what was intended as a promise to all. See N. on v. 15. A reference to 18: 18 will show, that the words of the latter part of this verse, were then addressed to all the apostles. There is no evidence whatever, that



bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

20 <sup>r</sup> Then charged he his disci-

q Ch. 17 : 9; Ma. 8 : 30; Lu. 9 : 21.

Peter had extraordinary powers here conferred upon him, not shared by his fellow-disciples.

19. *The keys, &c.* As the church was to be founded upon the great truths preached by Peter and his fellow-apostles, so by a continuation of the same figure, to them were committed, as it were, the keys of admission to it, and the power to bestow or withhold the blessings of the Messianic kingdom. The former promise had reference to the foundation of the edifice representing the church; this, to the admission of persons to the enjoyment of its blessings and privileges. The doctrines and instructions of the apostles, acting, as they did, under the immediate supervision of the Spirit (John 16 : 13), were to be the basis of admission to the church of Christ, and whoever rejected this basis of belief was to be excluded from it. In this sense, whatsoever Peter and his fellow-disciples should bind on earth, or declare to be unlawful, would be ratified in heaven, and whatsoever they should loose, or enjoin to be done, as a prerequisite to admission to the church, should be loosed or confirmed in heaven. The great principles and requisitions of the gospel are most unquestionably here referred to. These were to be communicated to men by Christ's chosen apostles. They were, therefore, in a sense to possess the keys of his kingdom. They were to shut and open, to bind and loose, and from their decision there was to be no appeal. No other gospel than that which they had received from Christ was to be preached (Gal. 1 : 8), no other terms of admission to his kingdom to be made, than those which they laid down. In this sense, which is the only one the passage will legitimately bear, it is disencumbered of all difficulties. The word *keys* is used here and elsewhere in the New Testament, as the emblem of power, in the sense of exclusion from or admission to cer-

tain privileges, or a certain state or condition. See 23 : 13; Luke 11 : 52; Rev. 1 : 18; 3 : 7; 9 : 1. *Keys of the kingdom of heaven* means, therefore, the power of admission to its privileges, and is employed, as above stated, to denote the duties and requisitions of the gospel, preached by Peter and the other apostles, as prerequisite for admission to the church of Christ. *Whatsoever thou shalt bind, &c.* A continuation of the sentiment of the preceding clause, but couched under different imagery. The previous figure was that of a gateway or passage leading to a place, the keys of which were to be intrusted to Peter and the other apostles. Here the figure is changed to that of binding or loosing, which seems to refer very clearly to the councils and decrees of the apostles, by which the affairs of the church were regulated, and its discipline administered. Under this imagery, the idea contained in the intrusting of the keys of admission to Peter, is expanded and explained. It shows clearly that reference throughout the whole is had to the doctrines and discipline of the apostles, by which men were to regulate their conduct, and secure to themselves the privileges of Christ's kingdom. *Shall be bound in heaven, i. e.* shall be ratified in heaven. This must follow, of course, if Peter and his fellow-apostles acted under the guidance of the Spirit, in the administration of the affairs of the church on earth. Their acts of legislation, in founding and establishing the church, and in arranging its internal and external polity, were no less the result of divine illumination, than the doctrines and duties which they preached and enforced. In all things pertaining to the apostolical functions, they were the fully accredited ambassadors of Christ, and as such their acts were final and irreversible.

20. *Then charged he, &c.* Luke says that "he straitly charged them, and

ples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

21 ¶ From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto

r Ch. 20 : 17 ; Ma. 8 : 31, & 9 : 31, & 10 : 33 ;  
Lu. 9 : 22, & 18 : 31, & 24 : 6, 7.

commanded them to tell no man that thing." The command was very strict and imperative. *That they should tell no man, &c.* In the conversation which had taken place, Jesus distinctly avowed himself to be the Messiah. This avowal, if noised abroad, would awaken the jealousy of the rulers, especially Herod, whose fears had recently been excited in regard to the fame of Jesus. The idea of temporal power and national aggrandizement, was so united in the Jewish mind with the Messiah's reign, that any one professing to be that personage, would have been regarded by the civil authorities, as a dangerous man to be put out of the way as speedily as possible. Hence our Lord took precautionary measures against a public disclosure of his high office, and forbade the conversation just held with his disciples, to be reported to any one.

21-28. OUR LORD FORETELLS HIS OWN DEATH AND RESURRECTION. *Region of Cesarea Philippi.* Mark 8 : 31-38 ; 9 : 1 ; Luke 9 : 22-27.

21. *From that time, &c.* Some hints had previously been given of his future sufferings (see 10 : 38 ; 12 : 40 ; John 3 : 14), but now having distinctly avowed his Messiahship, he proceeds to instruct his disciples as to the great object of his mission, to suffer and die for the sins of the world. Their minds were now in a measure prepared to receive this truth. But even with all their previous instruction, as to the spirituality of the Messianic dispensation, they were slow to admit the unwelcome truth, which now fell from their Master's lips. Luke (9 : 22) connects this announcement of his sufferings and death with the previous conversation. *How that he must go, &c.* It was rendered necessary by divine appointment, in order to accomplish the end of his

Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

22 Then Peter took him, and

mission. *Unto Jerusalem*, the place where he was to suffer (Luke 13 : 33). *And suffer many things*, i. e. endure much suffering. During the arraignment and trial of Jesus, as well as at his execution, this prediction was fully verified. Some of these acts of cruelty and indignities are particularly mentioned in 20 : 19 ; Luke 18 ; 32, 33. In the parallel passage in Mark and Luke, the idea of his rejection by the chief men of the nation is added. See John 19 : 15 ; Luke 19 : 14 ; Isa. 53 : 3. *The elders.* The Sanhedrim. See N. on 2 : 4. *The third day.* This conforms to the actual fact, and interprets the expression in Mark, "and after three days rise again."

22. *Then Peter took him.* He probably drew our Lord aside, being fearful of the effect which this strange declaration might have upon the minds of his fellow-disciples, and wishing to put an end to what he deemed the gloomy and unfounded forebodings of his Master. Some interpret : *taking him by the hand*, a very common thing, when advice is given or a rebuke administered. Perhaps the interpretations may be combined, *taking him by the hand and drawing him aside.* *Began to rebuke* ; literally, *rebuking addressed him.* He probably intended to administer a gentle reproof for what seemed to be groundless despondency. It should be borne in mind, that Jesus was at this time in the extreme north of Palestine, whither he had retired to avoid the jealousy of Herod. Peter supposed that his Master was beginning to yield to mental depression, on account of the obstacles thrown in his way by his unbelieving countrymen, and the dangers to which he was exposed. Being of a naturally bold and ardent temperament, and perhaps elated by the high praise

began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord : this shall not be unto thee.

23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me,

*s* See 2 Sa. 19 : 22. *t* Ro. 8 : 7.

just bestowed upon him by Jesus, he takes upon himself the office of endeavoring to restore his Master to his usual serenity of mind. His motives were good, but how little did he know, into what depths of ruin the human race would have fallen, had the Savior listened to his advice. He ought also to have left this and all other things, to the superior wisdom of him, whom he had just acknowledged to be the Christ the Son of the living God. Hence he was severely rebuked for his ill-timed interference. The verb here translated *to rebuke*, literally signifies, *to show honor to, to lay a value upon,* and hence *to lay a penalty upon*, i. e. to blame or censure. The word in this secondary sense, is expressive of strong disapprobation, it being employed in 17 : 18, of the rebuke administered by Jesus to the demon who had taken possession of the lunatic. *Be it far from thee*; more literally, *mercy on thee! God have mercy on thee!* It is an exclamation of surprise and tender solicitude. The idea that his Master should be put to death, and thus disappoint the hopes of those who looked upon him as the Messiah, was so distressing to Peter, that he commences his reproof with an ejaculation, that God would avert so terrible an evil. *This shall not be unto thee.* This may have been a usual form of deprecating evil, or perhaps it was intended as a positive declaration, that the event would turn out otherwise than his Master had predicted. In either case it evinced Peter's usual forwardness, and when considered as addressed to a Being, who had given such evidence of his divine wisdom and power, was presumptuous to the highest degree.

23. *But he turned, &c.* Mark : "when he had turned about and looked on his

*Satan* : 'thou art an offence unto me : for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

24 ¶ "Then said Jesus unto his

*u* Ch. 10 : 38; Ma. 8 : 34; Lu. 9 : 23, & 14 : 27; Ac. 14 : 22; 1 Th. 3 : 3; 2 Ti. 3 : 12.

disciples." Peter began to reprove his Master, probably, when he first took him by the hand or dress, to lead him apart; but Jesus immediately turned around, and, in the hearing of all, rebuked him for the worldly spirit and presumptuous interference, which really lay at the foundation of this solicitude, of which Peter, in the depth of his love and tenderness, was himself unconscious. *Get thee behind me, &c.* See N. on 4 : 10. It is not necessary to suppose that our Lord applied this term to Peter, as though he was the incarnation of Satan, nor, as is Olshausen's view, that he addressed Satan directly, as the one who was tempting Peter to evil. The words, *thou savourest the things, &c.* could hardly be applied to Satan, considered as personally addressed. The expression was intended, as a stern rebuke of an unwarrantable interference on Peter's part, to prevent the accomplishment of the great purpose of God in sending his Son into the world, thus acting as a co-worker with Satan, who had himself endeavored to tempt Christ from the course, which his Heavenly Father had marked out for him. *Thou art an offence to me*; literally, *thou art my stumbling-block*; not as in 13 : 41, a stumbling-block causing to sin, but an obstacle in the way of his Master's duty, in endeavoring to divert him from the great object for which he had come into the world. It thus becomes an explanatory term to what immediately precedes. *For thou savourest, &c.* Thy mind is set upon worldly pleasures, honors, and enjoyments. *Thou art to me, therefore, in thy present carnal state, an object of aversion.* *Savourest*; literally, *thinkest* *upon, hast set thy affections upon.* *The things that be of God, i. e. things heavenly, pure, divine, pleasing to God,*

disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

25 For <sup>a</sup> whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.

<sup>c</sup> Lu. 17 : 33; John 12 : 25. <sup>y</sup> Ps. 49 : 7, 8.

<sup>z</sup> Ch. 26 : 64; Ma. 8 : 38; Lu. 9 : 25.

<sup>a</sup> Da. 7 : 10; Zec. 14 : 5; ch. 25 : 31; Jude 14.

as opposed to *those that be of men*, i. e. such as man in his fallen state sets his affections upon.

24. *Then said Jesus, &c.* In Mark, he is said to have called the people unto him with his disciples; and in Luke, to have said to them all. His discourse, although thus addressed in general to all, is intimately connected with the preceding declaration of his sufferings and death, and was designed to show that all who would be enrolled as his disciples, must be ready to practise self-denial; and if not called to endure for his sake the death of the body, yet must have a spiritual fellowship in his sufferings (Phil. 3 : 10). *Will come after me*, i. e. be my disciple or follower. The verb *will*, does not here denote mere inclination, but *will*, combined with a choice or purpose. *Let him deny himself*. This refers not only to self-denial in respect to sinful pleasures and pursuits, but to a disregard for one's life, when it becomes necessary to lay it down in the Redeemer's service. *And take up his cross, &c.* See N. on 10 : 38.

25. See N. on 10 : 39.

26. *For what is a man profited, &c.* This appears to be a proverbial expression, used here by our Lord in a spiritual sense, to show the amazing worth of the soul, transcending in value any material object with which it may be compared. It stands as a reason, therefore, why discipleship with Christ, even when attended with trials and sufferings, is to be preferred to a life of self-indulgence and sinful pleasure. The possession of the whole material universe would be of no account whatever,

26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or <sup>y</sup> what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

27 For <sup>a</sup> the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, <sup>a</sup> with his angels; <sup>b</sup> and then he

<sup>b</sup> Job 34 : 11; Ps. 62 : 12; Pr. 24 : 12; Je. 17 : 10, & 32 : 19; Ro. 2 : 6; 1 Co. 3 : 8; 2 Co. 5 : 10; 1 Pe. 1 : 17; Re. 2 : 23, & 22 : 12.

if the soul, with its ever increasing capacity for happiness, or misery, is banished from the presence of God. The question, *what is a man profited, &c.* is put rhetorically for the declaration, *a man is not at all profited, &c.* *Whole world*, i. e. all the riches, pleasures, and sources of worldly enjoyment. The word *soul* or *life* refers here to the spiritual, immortal nature of man, subject hereafter to eternal life or eternal death. It has been suggested to me, by a highly valued and learned friend, that *soul* is here to be taken in the sense of *natural life*, it being the design of our Lord to show that even life itself, so highly valued that no one would part with it for the whole world, is to be freely surrendered, whenever the cause of Christ shall so demand. But the *losing* and *finding* in the previous verse, refers to life in its higher spiritual sense, and this verse is evidently intended to heighten the worth of the *soul*, by showing the sad overthrow of all happiness involved in its loss. *Or what shall a man give, &c.* A continuation of the same sentiment. *In exchange*; literally, *as a price* or *equivalent*. The infinite worth of the soul finds no equivalent for which it can be bartered away. The implication is, that God only can provide a ransom (Job 33 : 24), which if man rejects, there is nothing left by which he can purchase exemption from the penalty of sin and death. This is an additional reason, why the world is to be forsaken by all who would obtain eternal life. In no other way than by giving up all for Christ can the soul be saved, and hence suffering and death are not to be



shall reward every man according to his works.

28 Verily I say unto you,

shunned, but welcomed, if endured for His sake. Thus this verse becomes confirmatory of the declaration made in v. 24.

27. Our Lord here advances a step further in confirmation of the truth set forth in v. 24. A day of judgment is coming, when to every man shall be rendered the reward due to his works. Of what avail will it then be, to have enjoyed the things of this world, if a man has no interest in Christ? Notice that both here and in 25 : 31, our Lord refers to himself as the final judge, under the appellation of Son of man. I cannot but think that it is expressive of the full and perfect revelation of his *humanity*, as well as divinity, which he will make on that great and awful occasion. It is the *Son of man*, one who has descended into the very depths of our weak and humble condition, who has experienced the trials, sorrows, and temptations, which beset us in this world, and who has left us in his own life an example of patience, meekness, gentleness, love, and devotion to his Father's will, that is to sit upon the throne of judgment, and award to all their just deserts. There is something in this which appeals to the heart of all, especially of those who love his appearing (2 Tim. 4 : 8). *Shall come*. This refers to our Lord's appearance at the final judgment. In a secondary and subordinate sense, he is said to come to destroy Jerusalem (24 : 3, 27, 37, 38), and also at the hour of death (24 : 44 ; Luke 12 : 40), when the soul enters upon its career of happiness or misery, which in full degree shall be consummated and ratified at the day of judgment. *In the glory of his Father*, i. e. in all the effulgence of glory, with which God the Father is invested. *With his angels*. See 2 Thess. 1 : 7 ; Jude 14. See also N. on 25 : 31. *Shall reward*. This word is literally

There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

c Ma. 9 : 1 ; Lu. 9 : 27.

used of *giving up* or *paying off* in full that which belongs to another, as goods, commodities, wages, &c. This imagery is often employed to denote the service-pay or wages, for which men, as moral and accountable beings, are laboring. See Rom. 6 : 23. *According to his works* ; literally, *working* or *work* taken as a whole. The acts of men develop their true character. "By their fruits shall ye know them." This, at the last day, will constitute the criterion of judgment, as evincing the state of the heart. It is worthy of note, that in the parallel passages of Mark and Luke, our Lord refers to *shame*, as constituting the principal reason for his rejection by men, and as being required to them, when on the throne of judgment he also shall be ashamed of them, and banish them for ever from his presence.

28. *There be some standing*, &c. The people, as well as his disciples, had gathered around him at his call. See N. on v. 24. *Who shall not taste of death*. The original is strongly emphatic, it being literally, *shall not taste any part of death*, i. e. death shall not come near them, until they see the coming of the Son of man, which is here mentioned. The word *taste* is often used metaphorically for *experience*. The explanation of this verse is attended with some difficulty, as to which of the comings of the Son of man reference is had. To refer it to the Transfiguration, which took place only six days afterwards, is evidently erroneous, inasmuch as the words, *there be some standing here*, &c. evidently implies that a portion at least of his auditors would be dead, before the event took place. No one would think of using such language of an occurrence so near at hand. The transfiguration moreover was not the reality of the coming of the kingdom of God, but only its foreshadowing, as

## CHAPTER XVII.

AND "after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and

*a* Ma. 9 : 2 ; Lu. 9 : 28.

Peter (2 Pet. 1 : 16-18) evidently regarded it. The divine splendor, which on that occasion invested the Savior, who had assumed for man's redemption so low and humble a condition, was chiefly designed to strengthen the faith of his followers, to all of whom, after his resurrection, it was permitted to be told (17 : 9). It is equally manifest that the coming of Christ here spoken of, cannot refer to the day of judgment, inasmuch as some of those present were not to die, until they had seen this remarkable manifestation. There remain only two events to which it can be referred, the Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit, and the destruction of Jerusalem. Against the former of these the same objection lies, as against its reference to the transfiguration. Almost if not quite all of the persons then present, except Judas Iscariot, lived to see the glorious outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, which took place less than one year after this. It is better therefore to refer it to the destruction of Jerusalem, including however with that event, by which the church was freed from its most malignant and active enemies, the more general spread of the gospel and advancement of Christ's kingdom, from the day of Pentecost until its ultimate triumph was rendered certain, by the downfall of the seat of Judaism and the Jewish persecuting power. Our Lord thus cheers his followers, who had been cast down by the prediction of his sufferings and death, and their own trials and privations, with the announcement of his reappearance to establish and confirm his kingdom, and to destroy those malignant enemies of his church, who had conspired to effect his death, and had been the bitter persecutors of his followers.

## CHAP. XVII.

1-13. THE TRANSFIGURATION. *Region*

John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

*of Cesarea Philippi.* Mark 9 : 2-13 ; Luke 9 : 28-36.

1. *And after six days* from the time of the preceding conversation. Luke (9 : 28) says that it was "about an eight days after these sayings." He is less definite than Matthew or Mark, or may be supposed to have reckoned in the extreme days, while their reckoning embraces only the inclusive ones. Such slight discrepancies, so far from detracting from the veracity of the sacred writers, rather confirm their truthfulness, by showing the absence of all collusion or preconcertedness in their statements. *Peter, James, and John.* These faithful and beloved disciples, several times besides this, received marks of special favor (Mark 5 : 37 ; Matt. 26 : 37 ; John 20 : 2 ; Mark 16 : 7 ; 1 Cor. 15 : 7). Three persons were sufficient to attest the truth of this wonderful scene, and had more been present, it might have been somewhat difficult to have kept it secret. *And bringeth them*, i. e. they went at his invitation or request. The same verb is used of the taking of Jesus by the tempter to the pinnacle of the temple (Matt. 4 : 5), and shows that it does not there necessarily imply physical compulsion, as many expositors interpret it. *Into a high mountain.* Some think that Tabor was the scene of the Transfiguration. But there seems to be validity in the objection to this, that our Lord could hardly be supposed to have taken a journey into Galilee, to be transfigured on Mount Tabor, and then to have returned to the region of Cesarea Philippi, as it is evident he must have done from Mark 9 : 30. It appears also that he rejoined his disciples the next day (Luke 9 : 37) after the transfiguration, which would have been impossible, had he been transfigured on Mount Tabor, and his disciples remained at Cesarea Philippi. Some, to avoid this latter difficulty, argue that it took place on

2 And was transfigured before them : and his face did shine as

the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

his return to Galilee, and that the mountain was one of those bordering on the Lake. But this is irreconcilable with Mark as above quoted, from whose narrative it is quite clear, that this event took place, while they were in the extreme north of the land. It is better, therefore, to understand it of some mountain in the immediate neighborhood, although its identification now is out of the question. *Apart* from the others. Our Lord often retired by himself to pray and meditate, and on such occasions he frequently ascended some solitary hill or mountain, where he would be least liable to be interrupted. It appears from Luke 9 : 37, that they passed at least one whole night upon the mountain, and as they probably descended as soon as the glorious scene had closed, there must have been much time spent previously in prayer. It is quite likely that the transfiguration took place in the latter hours of the night, and that early in the following morning, they returned to the multitude. It is worthy of remark that Luke represents him as going up into the mountain to pray, and that while engaged in prayer, the transfiguration took place. According to the same Evangelist, the Spirit descended upon him on the banks of Jordan while he was engaged in prayer. Luke 3 : 21, 22.

2. *Was transfigured.* No substantial change is here implied, but only one of outward form and appearance. His features and bodily form were the same, but changed to ineffable glory and splendor. This appears clearly from Luke, who says that "the fashion (i. e. appearance) of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering." The design of this glorious investiture, as has been remarked (N. on 16 : 28), was doubtless to confirm the faith of his disciples, and fortify their mind against the painful scenes of the crucifixion, which were soon to follow. To these beloved dis-

ciples was vouchsafed a sign as it were from heaven, which had been denied the proud and unbelieving Pharisees. The highest evidence ever addressed to mortal ears was given to them, as to John the Baptist on a previous occasion (3 : 17), when they heard a voice from the most excellent glory (2 Pet. 1 : 17) saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The wonderful conversation of Christ and his two glorified servants respecting "his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9 : 31), must have enlightened them as to the true object of our Redeemer's mission into this world. Although afterwards they were still subject to doubts and perplexities on this point, yet the effect of this scene must have been great and lasting. Its remembrance must have produced in their own minds and those of the other disciples, to whom they were permitted to divulge it after their Lord's resurrection, the most cheering views of the glory of Christ, and also of the saints in heaven. Indeed this scene, more than any other, brings down heaven and its glories to earth, and gives a foretaste of the glory and blessedness of its celestial inhabitants. Olshausen regards the spiritual life of Jesus, as exhibiting itself in a process of development, his humanity receiving only by degrees into itself the fullness of the Godhead, in which process of development, the transfiguration formed a stage. But this view is liable to be misunderstood, if it be not positively objectionable on the score of truth. Development in spiritual life implies progress, and how this is reconcilable with the sinless nature of Jesus, and his abundant supply of the Spirit (John 3 : 34), is quite beyond our comprehension. We can see how he increased in wisdom (Luke 2 : 52), for he had a human soul, but inasmuch as that was sinless from his very birth, and as in him dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2 : 9), we do not see how development

3 And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

or progress can be predicated of his spiritual life. *Before them*, i. e. in their presence, and so as to be seen of them. *And his face did shine as the sun*. It not only had the sun's excessive brightness, but emitted dazzling rays like that luminary. *His raiment was white as the light*; literally, *was glittering or radiant white*. In Mark more fully: "his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them." So also Luke: "his raiment was white and glistening," literally, *flashing out as lightning, emitting dazzling rays*. Language could not express a greater excess of glory, than here invested our Savior.

3. *There appeared unto them*. It was no phantasm of the imagination, but a real appearance, visible to the natural eye. *Moses and Elias*. As Christ came to fulfil the law (5; 17), and by his death to magnify it and make it honorable (Isa. 42: 21), there was an appropriateness in this appearance of Moses the lawgiver, and Elias the zealous reformer and restorer of the law. Alford notices the points of resemblance between these two saints, in their extraordinary departure from this life, their supernatural fast of forty days and forty nights, and their both having been in the holy mount in the visions of God. Luke calls them, "men who appeared in glory," by which it would seem, that they were clad in the celestial radiance of the glorified spirits in heaven. It is evident from this passage, as well as from other portions of God's word, that saints in heaven are known and distinguished from one another, by the form and appearance of their glorified bodies, and, for aught which may be advanced to the contrary, addressed by the same names which they bore on earth. See Luke 16: 24. As these two glorified saints had never been seen by Peter and his companions, they probably became known on this occasion, from their hav-

4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt,

ing been addressed by name in their conversation with Jesus, or through some immediate act of his revealing power. Olshausen's conjecture, that their names were made known by Jesus, after the scene had ended, is precluded by what is said in verse 4, showing that Peter knew at the time what names they bore. *Talking with him*. In Luke (9: 31), we are informed of the subject of their conversation. In the death of Christ, which was soon to take place at Jerusalem, they, in common with all the glorified saints, must have felt an absorbing interest. Their attainment of heavenly bliss, from the depths of sin and exposedness to eternal death, was the result of that sacrifice which was about to be made. They knew its infinite value, and there were many things connected with it, which they, as well as the angels, desired to look into (see 1 Peter 1: 10-12). On the mount of transfiguration, they were permitted to converse with him, and learn the relations of his sufferings and death to that law, which, while on earth, they had promulgated and defended.

4. *Then answered Peter*. It appears from Luke, that Peter and his fellow-disciples, as the hours of the night passed away, being overcome with watchings and fatigue, had sunk into a deep sleep. But when they awoke of their own accord, or more probably, aroused by the glorious light which flashed upon them, they saw this wonderful appearance, and listened to the conversation which was going on. As the two men were about to depart, Peter, through fear and amazement, or perhaps from his great ecstasy, not knowing what he said (Luke 9: 33), but desirous of prolonging this wonderful vision and its enjoyment, proposed to construct three temporary booths, such as were erected at the feast of tabernacles. His purpose was very evident, although the



let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

5 <sup>b</sup> While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of

b 2 Pet. 1: 17. c Ch. 3: 17; Ma. 1: 11; Lu. 3: 22.

absurdity of the idea, that such celestial visitants would stand in need of booths constructed with human hands, can only be referred to the extreme bewilderment and agitation of his mind, in view of this overpowering glory. It is worthy of note that Peter did not, so far as we know, address a single word to Moses and Elias, nor do these saints appear to have noticed the presence of the disciples. Their thoughts and conversation were wholly engrossed with him, whom they knew to be their divine Redeemer, and who was the great central figure in the picture. In the presence of Christ, all created intelligences sink into insignificance. *Three tabernacles.* Tents or booths were oftentimes hastily constructed from boughs and branches of trees, to serve as a temporary lodging-place for the benighted traveller. Sometimes they were made, by stretching skins or canvas over poles fastened to upright stakes or posts. The feast of tabernacles was so called from the booths or tents, in which the people, who came up to the tabernacle or temple on that annual festival, dwelt for seven days. Alford notices the remarkable coincidence of terms in 2 Pet. 1: 14, 15, where he uses the words, *tabernacle* and *decease*, just before he alludes to the transfiguration. It is very evident that Peter, in his epistles, had a vivid recollection of this portion of our Lord's ministry, as may be seen by comparing Matt. 16: 23 with 1 Pet. 2: 7-8, and Matt. 16: 26 with 1 Pet. 1: 18.

5. *While he yet spake.* The heavenly visitants were about to depart as Peter spake (see Luke 9: 33). Previously to their departure, and while he was yet speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them (i. e. our Lord, Moses, and

the cloud, which said, 'This is my beloved Son,' in whom I am well pleased; 'hear ye him.

6 <sup>f</sup> And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

d Is. 42: 1. e De. 18: 15, 19; Ac. 3: 22, 23. f 2 Pe. 1: 18.

Elias), from which issued the awful voice of God the Father; and when they recovered from the terror of the scene, which almost deprived them of their senses (see v. 6), and from which they were relieved by the kind and encouraging tones of their Master, the glory had disappeared, and Jesus was with them alone as before the vision. *A bright cloud.* The summit of the mountain, or at least that portion on which they stood, was covered with ineffable splendor, like that of the Shechinah. It was called a cloud, because it appeared as a cloud, the centre of which, as Doddridge well remarks, "was filled and illumined with glory, the dazzling and insupportable rays of which were attempered by that part of the cloudy veil, which was between it and them." *Overshadowed them* with its glorious refugence. This refers of course to our Lord, Moses, and Elias. That the disciples did not enter into the cloud (Luke 9: 34) is evident, because the voice which they heard issued from it, as appears in the next clause, *a voice out of the cloud*, i. e. proceeding from the cloud. This was none other than the voice of God (2 Pet. 1: 17). *This is my beloved Son*, &c. Once before at his baptism, and once afterwards (John 12: 28), did God in an audible voice bear testimony in favor of his Son. *Hear ye him.* An emphatic declaration that the teachings of Jesus were to take pre-eminence over those of Moses and the prophets. Compare Deut. 18: 15; Heb. 1: 1, 2.

6. *And when the disciples heard it*, i. e. the voice from the cloud. *They fell upon their face*, through fear, and perhaps as an act of reverential prostration in presence of the Deity. *Were sore afraid.* It was an universally

7 And Jesus came and <sup>2</sup>touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

g Da. 8 : 18, & 9 : 21, & 10 : 10, 18.

prevalent opinion with the ancient Jews, that no one could see God and live. Compare Gen. 16 : 14, where the well beside which Hagar sat, when the angel of the Lord appeared unto her, was called Beer-lahai-roi, *well of life of vision*; i. e. of life after a vision of God. See also Ex. 20 : 19; Judges 13 : 22; Isa. 6 : 5. That such an idea was prevalent also among the ancient Romans, may be gathered from Livy, Book I : 16. Luke says, "they feared when they entered into the cloud," i. e. when Jesus and his heavenly visitants became enveloped in its splendor.

7, 8. *And Jesus came and touched them.* In like manner Daniel, when faint and weak from the overpowering vision, which he saw on the banks of Hiddekel (Dan. 10 : 8, 10), was touched by a hand and restored to strength. See also Rev. 1 : 17. *Arise, &c.* They had fallen upon their faces through fear. *When they had lifted up their eyes.* They had received strength and confidence from the touch of Jesus to rise up, and thus reassured, they looked around and *saw no man* (i. e. neither of the two men who had talked with Jesus) *save Jesus only.* Thus closes one of the sublimest scenes, upon which the eye of man was ever permitted to gaze. One cannot but admire the simple, unadorned language in which it is related, so different from the style, in which such a wonderful occurrence would have been penned by uninspired writers.

9. *And as they came down*; literally, *while they were coming down from the mountain.* This, as has been remarked (N. on v. 1), was probably on the following morning. *Tell the vision, &c.* It would have been a premature disclosure before the resurrection of Christ.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, <sup>4</sup>Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

10 And his disciples asked him,

h Ch. 16 : 20; Ma. 8 : 30, & 9 : 9.

The minds of the disciples in general were not yet prepared to receive it. Perhaps it would have seemed incredible to some, until they had been prepared for so wondrous a revelation of the unseen world, by the crowning proof of their Lord's divine mission and character, in his resurrection from the dead. It would also have tended to exasperate more highly the enemies of Jesus, and thus have impeded his ministry, if not brought it to a premature close. Other reasons doubtless were known to Jesus, for keeping his transfiguration secret for a time. *Vision*, i. e. the things which they saw. So it is expressly stated by Mark (9 : 9), which shows that it was not a mere vision, but a reality. The word *vision* is often taken in the general sense of, that which is revealed to the eye, in contradistinction from that which is made known in words. Here we may allude again to what Luke says (9 : 32), that it was when they were awakened out of sleep, that they saw his glory. It was no dream or phantasy of the imagination, therefore, but something upon which they looked in a state of entire wakefulness, and in the active exercise of all their faculties. *Until the Son of man, &c.* The repetition of so strange and unheard of a thing, as one's rising from the dead, appears to have amazed them, and given rise to much thought and discussion as to what it meant. See Mark 9 : 10. Perhaps a part of the conversation to which they had listened on the Mount, had reference to that subject. The general resurrection was a doctrine of their belief, but they could not comprehend what Jesus meant by saying on a previous occasion (16 : 21), that he should rise on the third day after his decease, and now directing

saying, 'Why then say the scribes, that Elias must first come?'

11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall

† Mal. 4 : 5 ; ch. 11 : 14 ; Ma. 9 : 11.

them not to disclose the vision they had just seen, until after his resurrection from the dead. We who are familiar with that event in the light of its inspired history, can have little conception, how strangely such an annunciation must have fallen upon the disciples' ears. *From the dead.* See N. on 14 : 2.

10. It appears that the disciples, while on their way back, took occasion from having seen Elias, to propose a question, in respect to which they were now in a state of perplexity. The train of thought is this : Elias has come down to earth and we have seen him. The prophecy of his coming (Mal. 4 : 5) is now fulfilled. But how then is it consistent with this fact, that in the prediction, his coming was to precede that of the Messiah? This is the point of the question, and in the reconciliation of the prediction with its accomplishment, as they believed, on the Mount of Transfiguration, lay the difficulty under which their mind was now laboring. Some critics give it, however, this turn : We are now satisfied beyond a doubt of thy Messiahship. But Elias has not yet appeared to our nation, as the prediction of his coming is interpreted by the scribes to teach. How is this? Are they mistaken in their exposition of the prophecy? This exposition is based on their belief that Elias was to abide for a time on the earth, whereas on the Mount he had only staid a few hours, and then ascended again to heaven, which they thought was not long enough to satisfy the terms of the prediction. But this view seems to overlook that point in the question, which seems to be most prominent, "must first come." On this account, the former interpretation is to be preferred. *Why say the scribes?* What grounds have they for saying?

first come, and <sup>k</sup>restore all things :

12 'But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but <sup>m</sup>have done

‡ Mal. 4 : 6 ; Lu. 1 : 16, 17 ; Ac. 3 : 21. † Ch. 11 : 14 ; Ma. 9 : 12, 13. ‡ Ch. 14 : 3, 10.

*Must first come*, i. e. must precede the Messiah.

11. Our Lord, with great kindness and condescension, at once removes the difficulty under which their mind was thus laboring. *Elias truly shall first come*, as was predicted. The future tense is here employed in reference to the fulfillment of the original prediction in Malachi, and not as designating something still in the future, a personal coming of Elias, before the second and final appearance of our Lord, which Olshausen and Alford erroneously think to be the real prediction, of which John's appearance in the *Spirit* of Elias was only a partial fulfillment. This use of the future, from the standpoint of the time in which the prediction was uttered, is evident from the following context. *And restore all things*, i. e. act as a general reformer, and prepare the mind of the people to receive the Messiah. The word *restore* is here used of the re-establishment of the people of Israel to the order, prosperity, and happiness, which, as a type of the Messianic times, they had enjoyed in the days of the theocracy, and especially during the reign of David. It was erroneously regarded, however, as a temporal rather than a spiritual restoration. *All things*, i. e. the moral condition of things, to which the prophecy contrary to the general belief referred.

12. Our Lord now proceeds to show that the prophecy had been truly and fully accomplished. *Elias has come already.* He referred so evidently to John the Baptist, that the disciples at once took his meaning (see v. 13). *And they knew him not.* They did not receive or recognize him as the predicted Elias. Their minds were so blinded and perverted by prejudice, that they did not discern his true office and mis-

unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise "shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

13 ° Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

n Ch. 16 : 21. o Ch. 11 : 14.

sion. This was particularly true of the chief men of the nation. Many of the common people believed John to be a prophet, although very few of them even, had a clear view of the nature of his mission. *Have done unto him, &c.* They hated him as a bold, uncompromising reformer, and effected his death. Herod was the instrument of this, but the act is charged upon the nation, both because it was done by the civil authority, and because the people in general, especially the priests and rulers, entertained towards him a deadly hatred, which only waited some convenient opportunity to effect his death. *Likewise shall also the Son of man, &c.* Their treatment of the Forerunner was a clear indication of what they would do to our Savior. There is no obscurity in this passage thus explained. It is only perplexing to those who believe in a future and literal appearance of Elias on earth, which notion has no support either from this passage, or from the original prophecy in Malachi.

14-21. THE HEALING OF A DEMONIAK, WHOM THE DISCIPLES COULD NOT HEAL. *Region of Cesarea Philippi.* Mark 9 ; 14-29 ; Luke 9 : 37-43.

14. *And when they were come, &c.* It appears from Mark (9 : 14-16), that the scribes, taking advantage of his absence, were troubling his disciples with puzzling questions and sophistical arguments, a great multitude having gathered around them. They were undoubtedly endeavoring to shake their faith in Jesus, by advancing objections to his Messiahship. Perhaps they were also endeavoring to find some ground of accusation against him, in what might fall from the disciples' lips. At this time Jesus was seen approaching in the distance, and the multitude left the

14 ¶ ° And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a *certain* man kneeling down to him, and saying,

15 Lord, have mercy on my son ; for he is lunatic, and sore

p Ma. 9 : 14 ; Lu. 9 : 37.

scribes, and running to meet him, saluted him. When he came to his disciples, with a holy indignation at the hypocritical and artful designs of the scribes, he asks, in a tone of authority and reproof, why they thus questioned with his disciples. Either through conscious guilt and mental confusion at his sudden and unlooked for appearance, or by the interruption of the father of the lunatic, they seem to have made no reply. These incidents, which are found only in Mark, should be read, in order to keep the thread of the narrative before the mind. *There came to him.* In his parental anguish, he first cried to Jesus from a distance (Luke 9 : 38), but now he comes into his immediate presence, and kneeling prefers his request. It must not be supposed that he kneeled in religious adoration, but as an earnest, humble suppliant. His frame of mind was, however, one of humble faith and reliance on the ability and willingness of Jesus to heal his son (see Mark 9 : 24).

15. *My son.* Luke says that he was his only child. *He is a lunatic ;* literally, *moon-struck.* See N. on 4 : 24. This disease, as here developed, was not inconsistent with the alleged demoniacal influence. *And sore vexed ;* literally, *suffers badly.* It was a case of extreme suffering, for not only was he subject to these violent fits, but, according to Mark, was also dumb. *Oftentimes he falleth, &c.* These sudden fits were constantly endangering his life, in the way here mentioned. In the fuller account of Mark and Luke, he is represented, while in the fit, as foaming at the mouth, gnashing with his teeth, and being torn and bruised by the violence to which he was excited by the evil spirit within. When brought into



vexed : for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

17 Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse ge-

neration, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

the presence of Jesus (see v. 20), he was seized with one of these sudden and violent paroxysms, and so dreadful were his sufferings, that our Lord was amazed, and inquired the length of time, in which he had been thus afflicted. See Mark 9 : 20-23.

16. *And I brought him*, &c. Reference is had to the apostles who had been left behind, including also his other disciples and followers. *And they could not cure him*. This resulted from their unbelief (see v. 20). They, doubtless, oftentimes adjured the spirit in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of him, but without success. The case seemed to them so desperate, that their faith in being able to effect a cure was weak, and hence they were unsuccessful. Other reasons also for their weakness of faith are referred to in N. on v. 21.

17. *O faithless and perverse generation*. There has been much doubt as to whom these words were addressed. Origen refers them to the disciples alone. Their opinion seems entitled to the most weight, who, with Chrysostom, regard our Lord as addressing the whole multitude. There were, doubtless, many circumstances attending the efforts of the disciples to cast out the demon, which Jesus well knew, but of which we are not informed. Some of these we may conjecture. The disciples shared his rebuke for their want of faith. The scribes, no doubt, rejoiced in their failure to eject the evil spirit, and pronounced them all impostors, arguing, as Calvin in substance remarks, from the impotence of the disciples to the impotence of their Master. It may have been upon this very subject, that they were wrangling with the disciples, when Jesus came down from the mount.

We might conjecture this from the Savior's question to the scribes (Mark 9: 14) having been answered by the father, in the relation of the unsuccessful attempt, which had been made by the disciples to cure his son. The scribes were therefore rebuked, and the whole multitude, so far as they sympathized with them in exulting over the disciples' want of success. The epithet *faithless*, is thought to apply to the disciples, and *perverse* (literally, *crooked*), to the scribes. So of the next clauses, *how long* (literally, *until when*) *shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?* the former is in like manner to be referred to the disciples, the latter to the scribes. *Be with you*. As though he had said: have I not been with you long enough to teach you, that in my name you can do all things, however difficult or even impossible they may seem to be? *Suffer you*, i. e. bear with your unbelief and hardness of heart. *Bring him hither*. What confidence and dignity on the part of Christ, do these words evince.

18. *And Jesus rebuked the devil* for his malignant effort to destroy the child. The reader should turn to Mark 9 : 20-28, in which will be found a more circumstantial account of this cure, which, in many particulars, was one of the most remarkable miracles of our Lord, and worthily followed his glorious transfiguration. *From that very hour*. See N. on 9 : 22.

19. *Apart*, "into the house," Mark. *Why could not we*, &c. They felt mortified and distressed at their failure, and therefore took the first opportunity to learn the cause of it.

20. *Because of your unbelief*. See N. on v. 16. Their distrust in the promise of Christ, who had given them power

19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, why could not we cast him out?

20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, <sup>9</sup> If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed,

q Ch. 21: 21; Ma. 11: 23; Lu. 17: 6; 1 Co. 12: 9, & 13: 2.

over all unclean spirits (10: 1-8), was very wrong and unseasonable, for then, if ever, in the presence of the cavilling scribes, they ought not to have suffered their faith to waver, and thus brought dishonor upon their Master and his cause. Faith was demanded of them as a necessary condition, on which power was given them to work miracles. *For verily*, &c. An illustration of the power of faith is here introduced, so incredible, however to the natural heart, that Jesus confirms it by *verily*, his usual mode of affirmation (see N. on 5: 18). *As a grain of mustard seed*. A proverbial expression, denoting *in the least degree* or *quantity*. So *to remove mountains* was a form of expression, employed to denote the performance of a thing, so great as to be apparently impossible. The Romans expressed the idea of wild and hyperbolic promises, by the phrase *to promise mountains* (see Sallust, Cat. 23, § 3). *Unto this mountain*. It is thought that he pointed to the mountain from which he had just descended, and which, being high (see v. 1), could be easily seen from the place where they then were. It was, undoubtedly, some mountain in the immediate neighborhood. *Be thou removed*, &c. On two other occasions, our Lord repeated this sentiment; once by the removal of a mountain into the sea (21: 21; Mark 11: 23), and at another time, by the removal of a sycamore tree into the sea (Luke 17: 6). In this case, while repeating the words *to yonder place* (literally, *there*), he probably pointed in the direction of the sea, thus rendering the expression definite to the disciples. *And nothing shall be impossible to you*. This enlarges the promise of miraculous power to its

ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove: and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

widest extent. The disciples, however, had no license from this promise to attempt the performance of any miracle, which did not tend directly to the glory of God, and the advancement of the cause of truth on earth.

21. *This kind*, i. e. this class of beings, viz. demons. Not as it is often interpreted, *this kind of demons*, as though it were harder or required more faith, fasting, and prayer, to expel some than others. There are undoubtedly orders in the evil hierarchies, as well as in the good, but it is as easy for divine power, acting through human agency, to cast out and bind Beelzebub himself, as one of his inferior demons. Nor does our Lord require different degrees of faith, and a different preparation of heart, to cast out demons of different malignity and power. He demands at all times, and on all occasions, the fullest and most implicit trust in himself, and makes no distinction between great and small miracles, which, in reference to the divine power exerted in their performance, are all the same. A general truth, however, of great importance is taught in this passage. In the absence of their Lord, the disciples had become so engrossed with the multitude, who in connection with the scribes were plying them with questions, and drawing them into discussions, that they neglected their seasons of prayer and self-abasement. They were therefore unfitted for the work of expelling the demon. Their faith failed them, for this grace is kept strong and active, only by the exercise of prayer and self-renunciation. Prayer and fasting are therefore insisted upon by Christ, as an essential prerequisite to that faith, by which only can demons be

22 ¶ And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men :

23 And they shall kill him, and

r Ch. 16 : 21, & 20 : 17 ; Ma. 8 : 31, & 9 : 30, 31, & 10 : 33 ; Lu. 9 : 22, 44, & 18 : 31, & 24 : 6, 7.

expelled. *This kind goeth not out* (is not dispossessed from men) *but by prayer and fasting*, which you, my disciples, have neglected to observe during my absence. This seems to be the obvious sense of the passage. Olshausen refers this in part to the person cured, who had, by his sins of impurity, plunged himself into this nervous disorder (but see Mark 9 : 21, "from a child"), and therefore required a wise treatment. But not to speak of other objections, what had this to do with the question of the apostles, "Why could not we cast him out?" the answer to which, on Olshausen's view, should have been, not their want of faith, but ignorance of the nature of the disease, and kind of treatment to be enjoined.

22, 23. JESUS AGAIN FORETELLS HIS OWN DEATH AND RESURRECTION. *Galilee*. Mark 9 : 30-32 ; Luke 9 : 43-45.

22, 23. *And while they abode*, &c. We find in Mark 9 : 30, that Jesus and his disciples departed thence (i. e. from the region of Cæsarea Philippi), and passed through Galilee (i. e. the upper portion), on his way through Capernaum. It appears also from Mark, that he made this journey as privately as possible, in order that he might have opportunity to instruct his disciples more fully, respecting his death and resurrection. *While they abode*. A better rendering would here be, *while they were passing along* on their way from Cæsarea Philippi to Capernaum. Thus the narration harmonizes with that of Mark, and also with Matthew himself, who, in v. 24, represents them as having come to Capernaum. *The Son of man*, &c. Our Lord here plainly foretells his own death and resurrection, and thus removes from the minds of his followers any lingering hope, that what he had previously said (16 : 21), might

the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.

24 ¶ And when they were come to Capernaum, they that re-

s Ma. 9 : 33.

have arisen from despondency and gloomy forebodings, rather than from a future reality. *Shall be betrayed*; literally, *shall be delivered up*. See N. on 10 : 4. *Of men*. There is great pathos in this expression, when it is remembered that to redeem sinful men, our blessed Savior came down from heaven to suffer and die. That the persons he came to redeem should be his murderers, must have struck all holy beings with amazement. *Were exceeding sorry*. Something more than mere sympathy with their Master's sufferings is here implied. All their expectations of a temporal, reigning, victorious Messiah were now disappointed. There may have been some lingering hope, that in some mysterious way he would yet triumph over his enemies, but the future was henceforth dark to them, until they were enlightened by the Spirit, as to the real nature of Christ's mission and kingdom. Mark and Luke both say, that they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him for a more full explanation. This does not imply any doubt as to the truth of his declaration respecting his death, but only that they could not reconcile it with their preconceived notions of the Messiah, which personage they now knew Jesus to be. It is worthy of note, that henceforth they seem to have stood in awe of Jesus, and been impressed with the mystery of his character and mission, to a greater degree than before (see Mark 10 : 32).

24-27. TRIBUTE FOR THE TEMPLE SERVICE DEMANDED OF CHRIST. *Capernaum*.

24. *They that received the tribute money*; literally, *the receivers of the didrachmas*. The didrachma or double drachma was a silver coin, of the value of two Attic drachmas, as its name im-

ceived tribute-money, came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?

25 He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take

custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?

26 Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

27 Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and

ports, or a Jewish half-shekel, equal to about 30 cents of our money. It was a yearly tax to support the temple worship, paid by every Jew, and not as the word *tribute* might mislead some to suppose, a civil tax or impost paid to the Romans. *Came to Peter* as the oldest and leading apostle. *Doth not your master*, &c. This temple tribute was voluntary, although so established by long custom that it was almost universally paid. In the time of Nehemiah (see Neh. 10 : 32), this tribute was the third part of a shekel. The question is shaped, as if it were taken for granted, that a religious teacher of the character and pretensions of Jesus, would not overlook so important a duty, as helping to support the temple service. Peter, not willing that his Master should forfeit the good opinion here entertained of him, promptly replied in the affirmative. Many interpreters think that this was rashly spoken by Peter, and that in the subsequent conversation, a mild rebuke was administered to him by his Master. *Pay tribute*; literally, *the didrachmas*.

25. *He saith, Yes*. Either our Lord had paid this tribute on a previous occasion, or Peter assumed that he would do so, from his observance of all religious usages and duties. *Into the house*, where Jesus had already gone, while Peter was conversing with the tax-receiver. Some have singularly referred this to Jesus, as the one who went into the house. But the original does not at all permit this. *Jesus prevented him*, i. e. anticipated him in speaking. This shows that he knew well what lay upon Peter's mind. Proofs and illustrations of his omniscience are thus to be found, in many of the incidents of his public

life. *What thinkest thou?* What do you think of the question which I am about to propose, in its bearings upon the payment of the tribute-money? *Kings of the earth*, as opposed to the idea which underlies this whole passage, that God, the King and Governor of all, may on like principles exempt his Son from the payment of tribute to support his temple worship. *Of their own children*, i. e. members of their own family. *Or of strangers*, i. e. those of the people not belonging to their own family.

26. Peter's reply, that earthly monarchs exacted tribute of strangers or persons out of their family, established the truth of Jesus' inference. *Then are the children free*; literally, *then the children at least* (whatever may be true of others) *are free*. The argument was left to be mentally filled up, but yet was conducted to such a point, that Peter could be at no loss, as to the inference which he was to draw, that Jesus, the Son of God, in whose honor the temple was erected, was wholly free from any moral obligation to pay for the support of its worship. This explanation is based on the well-established fact, that this was a religious, and not a civil tax. Had it been the latter, the illustration would not have been in point.

27. *Lest we should offend them*, or put a stumbling-block in their way, by seeming to undervalue the temple worship, and thus needlessly prejudice them against the truths of the gospel. Our Lord includes Peter with himself, because he was of his company, and because the time had not come, when the distinction was to be openly made between Jesus the only begotten Son of God (John 1 : 14, 18; 3 : 16), and



take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

those who were God's children by adoption (Rom. 8 : 15 ; Gal. 4 : 4 ; Eph. 1 : 5). *To the sea of Galilee, on the shore of which was situated Capernaum. Take up the fish (in thy hand) which first cometh up, i. e. is brought up on the hook.* Trench translates: Draw up with thy line, the fish that first ascends from the deep waters to thy hook. But it was manifestly beyond the power of Peter, to make choice what fish he should draw up on his hook. The direction is evidently that he was to take in his hand, and open the mouth of the first one he drew up, whether it were a large or small fish, or of what kind soever it might be. *Thou shalt find, &c.* It is probable that the fish had swallowed this piece of money, although the same Being whose omniscient eye saw it in the fish's mouth, could easily have created it, had it been necessary. When things, however, can be explained otherwise, it is not well to multiply miracles. Christ's omnipresence and power, as well as his omniscience, are strikingly manifest, in that while he himself was at a distance, he caused this particular fish to approach the hook and be drawn up. *For me and thee.* The piece of money was a *stater*, or four drachmas, the sum necessary to pay the tax of Peter and his Master. The word translated *for*, is literally *in the place of*, and conforms to its being the redemption money, paid *for* a person, according to the direction in Ex. 30 : 12.

This chapter contains some of the most remarkable incidents in our Saviour's life. The transfiguration, in which the curtains of the heavenly world are drawn aside, and we are permitted to see the glory of the divine Redeemer and his chosen saints—the benevolence and power manifested in the cure of the demoniac—the full and explicit prediction of his sufferings

## CHAPTER XVIII.

AT <sup>a</sup> the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven ?

*a* Ma. 9 : 33 ; Lu. 9 : 46, & 22 : 24.

and death—his divine attributes manifested in providing the tribute money, are all to be regarded as developing some of the most interesting features in his whole history.

## CHAP. XVIII.

1-35. CONTENTION AMONG THE DISCIPLES WHO SHOULD BE THE GREATEST. JESUS INCULCATES HUMILITY, FORBEARANCE, AND BROTHERLY LOVE. *Capernaum.* Mark 9 : 33-50 ; Luke 9 : 46-50.

1. *At the same time, &c.* This conversation is introduced in Mark (9 : 33, 34) by an inquiry of Jesus, as to what his disciples had disputed upon by the way. They at first held their peace, probably through shame, for they had been warmly discussing the question, who should be greatest in the kingdom of the Messiah, which, as they understood our Lord's words (16 : 28), was soon to be established. Finding, however, that nothing could be concealed from Christ, they boldly propose the question as recorded here by Matthew, *who is the greatest* ; literally, *who then is greatest, &c.* The particle *then*, unfortunately omitted in our common version, shows that the question in Matthew grew out of just such an incident or conversation, as is fully narrated in Mark, and partially so in Luke. Jesus had so recently, and in so impressive a manner, foretold his own sufferings and death, and had laid down such self-denying conditions of their discipleship, that it seems surpassing strange, that they should have admitted such thoughts into their mind. It can only be accounted for in their low and imperfect views of the nature of Christ's kingdom, and what was required of them to be his followers. There was also yet much carnality in their views of the great object

2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

3 And said, Verily I say unto you, <sup>b</sup>Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>b</sup> Ps. 131 : 2; ch. 19 : 14; Ma. 10 : 14; Lu. 18 : 16; 1 Co. 14 : 20; 1 Pe. 2 : 2.

and purpose of life. As to what gave rise to the dispute, we can only conjecture. The most probable supposition is the preference shown to the three disciples, who accompanied him to the mount of Transfiguration, which may have excited their pride and expectation of future honors, and at the same time the envy of those less favored. *Is greatest*; literally, *the greater*, in dignity and authority.

2. *And Jesus called, &c.* He had previously assumed the sitting posture of teacher, and called around him the Twelve (see Mark 9 : 35). He was now about to teach an important lesson, and he wished all to hear. A little child that happened to be playing near, furnished an appropriate and expressive symbol of that humility and absence of ambition and worldly-mindedness, which he wished to inculcate upon his disciples.

3. *Be converted*, i. e. changed in disposition, and turned away from ambitious rivalry. This term, which is often used to denote regeneration, is taken here in a more progressive and general sense, of the amendment of one's life and conduct, for it cannot be supposed that the apostles were yet unconverted men. *As little children* (literally, *as the little children* represented by the one referred to in v. 2), in the graces of humility, ingenuousness, freedom from pride, ambition, and a worldly spirit. *Ye shall not* (an intensive negative *not at all*) *enter, &c.* Not to speak of having the pre-eminence sought for, ye shall not be permitted even to enter the kingdom of heaven. What a blow to all their ambitious aims and aspirations.

4 <sup>c</sup> Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 And <sup>d</sup> whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

6 <sup>e</sup> But whoso shall offend one  
<sup>c</sup> Ch. 20 : 27, & 23 : 11. <sup>d</sup> Ch. 10 : 42; Lu. 9 : 48. <sup>e</sup> Ma. 9 : 42; Lu. 17 : 1, 2.

4. *Shall humble himself, &c.* This does not imply that the little child had humbled itself, as was required of Christ's disciples. The sentiment is this: *shall humble himself* (and become) *as this little child*. The child was to be the pattern of humiliation, but not of the process by which it was to be effected. *Greatest in the kingdom*, i. e. he will reach the highest seat of happiness and glory. It is implied clearly in 1 Cor. 15 : 39-41, that there are grades of glory and bliss among the redeemed spirits in heaven, and we are here taught by our Lord, on what such distinctions will be founded. Not distinguished mental ability, or great theological attainments, but the possession of a meek and humble spirit, will be the passport to distinction in heaven.

5. *Shall receive, &c.* See N. on 10 : 40. *One such little child*, i. e. one who has thus humbled himself as denoted in v. 4. Alford understands the term, as embracing both actual and spiritual children, but in this verse, the expression refers solely to such as have a meek and child-like spirit. The collocation of the original is very emphatic, *such a little child, one even*. Many who are forward to do deeds of benevolence on a great scale, would, perhaps, require no small enlargement of their faith and love, to seek out and assist some poor, humble, and despised "little one," in the spirit enjoined by this passage. *Receiveth me*. The reference is here more general than in 10 : 40 (on which see N.), embracing not only all Christ's ministers, but every private disciple who manifests this spirit of humility.

of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

7 ¶ Woe unto the world because of offences! for <sup>f</sup> it must needs be that offences come; but <sup>g</sup> woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

<sup>f</sup> Lu. 17: 1; 1 Co. 11: 19.      <sup>g</sup> Ch. 26: 24.

7. Between the preceding verse and this, Mark 9: 38-41, and Luke 9: 49, 50, are to be read, where we are told that John informed his Master, that they had forbidden a man's casting out devils in his name, because he did not follow them. This interruption, however, did not divert our Lord from pursuing the lesson of instruction in reference to humility, forbearance, and brotherly love, which he was teaching his disciples. *Shall offend.* See N. on 5: 29. It is not improbable that the dispute in regard to pre-eminence (Mark 9: 33) had been conducted in such a manner, as to excite angry feelings, and give offence, and hence our Lord took occasion to caution against giving offences, and to enforce the duty of seeking reconciliation with an offended brother. *One of these little ones,* &c. Reference is had to such as possess the humility and child-like spirit which he is commending. This is evident from the scope of the passage, as well as from the words, *which believe in me*, which show that spiritual children or *little ones* are referred to. *It were better for him;* literally, *it were profitable to him.* As the expression evidently implies a comparison, the common translation is a good one. *A millstone;* literally, *a stone turned by an ass.* Hand-mills were in common use, turned by two females, usually maid-servants of the lowest station, who sat or knelt at their work opposite to each other, each taking hold of the handle, and impelling the upper stone half way around, or both turning it around to-

8 <sup>h</sup> Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire.

9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to en-

<sup>h</sup> Ch. 5: 29, 30; Ma. 9: 43, 45.

gether. But large mills were turned by an ass, and hence the upper stone of such mills was designated *an ass-millstone.* The great size of these stones gave rise to the proverbial expression here made use of, to denote complete and irremediable destruction. As there could be no escape from death, to one plunged into the depths of the sea, with such an enormous stone attached to his neck, so irretrievable ruin, of a far more dreadful kind, would come upon one, who should offend or cause to fall into sin one of the humblest of Christ's children. *In the depth of the sea;* literally, *in the high or main sea of the sea*, an expression of great intensity, signifying the very centre or deepest portion of the sea. The general idea of this passage is, that a man had better suffer the most dreadful death, than to live on, to commit the sin of offending one of Christ's little ones. It is not necessary to give point to this illustration, to suppose that punishment by drowning was really inflicted by the Jews. The fact that it was a Roman, as well as Macedonian punishment, is sufficient to have given rise to the proverb.

7. *Woe unto the world.* The word *world* is here used, as in 5: 14, to denote the inhabitants of the earth, men, mankind. *Offences,* occasions, enticements, and allurements to sin, including, of course, indignities and affronts (see N. on v. 6). These might arise from persecutions, or more subtle and insidious efforts to lead believers away from

ter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell-fire.

the truth. *It must needs be*, i. e. the prevalence of corrupting influences and temptations to apostatize from Christ, or fall into sins of less magnitude, was to be expected, and would almost certainly take place. There was no necessity for this, other than in the wickedness and natural enmity to truth, which have possession of the carnal heart. *Woe to that man, &c.* It is a sin of great magnitude, and to be followed by fearful punishment, to be the voluntary cause or occasion of the apostasy or falling away into sin of one of Christ's followers. As he who is instrumental in the salvation of a fellow sinner, enhances his own glory and bliss in heaven (Dan. 12 : 3), so on the contrary, one who conspires to effect the ruin of another, brings increased condemnation upon himself.

8, 9. These verses are a slightly varied repetition of 5 : 29, 30, on which see Notes. Our Lord here lays down the principle, that the best way to avoid the sin and condemnation of being stumbling-blocks to others, is to remove every cause of offence in one's self. *It is better for thee*; literally, *it is good for thee to enter—rather than, &c.* The force of the comparison is not diminished but rendered more emphatic, in its expression, by the positive form of the adjective. In 5 : 29, "it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish." The sentiment is the same in both places. It is not taught here that the glorified bodies of those in heaven, will be mutilated or deficient in any of their members. The sense is, that if such a thing were true, a maimed body in heaven is far preferable to a body, perfect and whole in all its parts, and yet shut up to the torments of hell. The members of the body here spoken of, figuratively represent the various forms of sin and self-indulgence which are to be renounced. Heaven without these is to be preferred to their unrestrained indulgence in the world of torment. *Everlasting fire.* That the usual acceptance of the word *everlast-*

10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven

*ing*, to denote endless duration, is correct, appears clearly from the varied expression, in the parallel passage in Mark (9 : 43, 44), "into hell, into the fire which shall never be quenched, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." The word *aionion*, translated *everlasting*, is used in the great majority of instances in the New Testament, of God, of the unseen and future world, of the perpetuity of Christ's kingdom (2 Pet. 1 : 11), of the happiness of the saints in heaven, and of eternal life. In a few instances, it is employed of the punishment of the wicked. It is very clear, that we have no right to limit its signification in these latter instances, to denote *finite* duration, while in so great a number of instances, we are obliged by the nature of the subject, to give it the meaning of *endless* duration (see more fully N. on 25 : 46). The adherence to its usual signification, becomes still more the duty of the expositor of God's word, finding, as he does, so many forms of expression, which place the eternity of future punishment beyond all doubt or question. *With one eye*; original, *one-eyed*.

10. *Take heed, &c.* Our Lord here resumes the train of instruction, which had been partially interrupted by vs. 7-9. His warning is now directed against pride, and a contemptuous demeanor towards his followers, whose humility, meekness, and lowliness of heart are represented by the phrase, "little ones," drawn from the illustration of the little child, with which Jesus commenced his discourse. Alford thinks that children are included in the term "little ones," as being in fact the only disciples, in the external form of the church, who are sure to be that in reality, which their baptism has put upon them. But it is far better to refer the expression to the same class of humble believers, spoken of in v. 6, where the words, "that believe in me," limit it to actual believers in Christ. *Despise*; literally,



‘their angels do always <sup>k</sup> behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

11 <sup>l</sup> For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

*i* Ps. 34 : 7 ; Zec. 13 : 7 ; He. 1 : 14. & Es. 1 : 14 ; Lu. 1 : 19.

*look down upon, treat with haughty demeanor. In heaven,* belongs to the words *their angels* in the sense, *their angels when in heaven* (i. e. when not sent to other parts of the universe to do God’s will and pleasure) *do always behold, &c.* This stands as a reason, why Christ’s little ones are not to be despised or thought lightly of. The Jews supposed that every good man, at least, had his guardian angel. Whether in its fullest extent this be true or not, we are warranted from God’s word in believing, that angels not only take a lively interest in all that pertains to human salvation, but are oftentimes the special guardians and attendants of those who are beloved of God. Compare Ps. 34 : 7 ; 91 : 11 ; Gen. 32 : 1 ; Heb. 1 : 14. The angels that watch over the humble followers of Christ are said to be *presence angels* (see Luke 1 : 19), i. e. angels of the highest dignity, the imagery being borrowed from Oriental courts, where the highest in rank and authority stand nearest to the king, and are permitted to see his face. See 1 Kings 10 : 8 ; Prov. 22 : 19 ; Dan. 1 : 5 ; Luke 21 : 36.

11. *For the Son of man, &c.* This is a second and more cogent reason, why the humblest of Christ’s family are not to be despised. The inestimable ransom paid for their salvation, in the death of Him who came to save that which was lost, renders them objects of his highest love, and therefore they are not to be held in disesteem by any. This admonition strikes at the very root of those grades and distinctions, too often found in the churches of Christ, which are based, not so much on attainments in piety and personal worth, as upon the position in society, which wealth and family connections enable their possessor to take. In the

12 How think ye ? if a man have <sup>m</sup> an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and

*l* Lu. 9 : 56, & 19 : 10 ; Jno. 3 : 17, & 12 : 47.  
*m* Lu. 15 : 4.

kingdom of Christ he is greatest, who has made the highest attainments in the graces of the Spirit, whatever may be his worldly condition. Alford cites Steir’s beautiful thought: “Here is Jacob’s ladder planted before our eyes: beneath are the little ones; then their angels; then the Son of man in heaven, in whom alone man is exalted above angels, who as the Great Angel of the covenant, cometh from the presence and bosom of the Father; and above Him again (v. 14) the Father himself and his good pleasure.”

12. The train of reasoning is this: The high estimation in which my Father (see v. 14) holds the humblest of the redeemed ones, is seen in the joy which he feels at their recovery from ruin, and his unwillingness that any of them should perish. His joy is like that which is felt by a tender-hearted and faithful shepherd, who anxiously seeks after a lost sheep, even for the time being deserting the main flock, in his search for the straying animal. This argument and illustration furnishes the third and last reason, why the most lowly member of Christ’s family is to be regarded with love and respect. This illustration is found in a more expanded form in Luke 15 : 4–6. *How think ye ?* What is your opinion of this illustration to which I am about to call your attention? *A hundred sheep.* A round number here used for the sake of illustration. *Be gone astray.* In the case of a large flock, instances like the one here mentioned, were of no uncommon occurrence. *The ninety and nine.* Although these were all safe, yet to restore the lost one to the fold, they were all temporarily deserted, as though comparatively of no worth or account. This renders the illustration more pertinent and striking. See Luke 15 : 4–7.

seeketh that which is gone astray ?

13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that *sheep*, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

*Into the mountains.* Alford and others construct these words with the preceding clause, in the sense: *doth he not leave the ninety and nine (to wander) in the mountain?* This seems to accord better with Luke (15 : 4), than the common construction and translation, yet the idea that the shepherd returned to the mountain or hill, on which his flock had been pasturing, and where he supposed the stray sheep yet to be, is so natural and beautiful, that the common translation seems preferable, especially as it meets equally well the wants of the original.

13, 14. *And if so be, &c.* The form of the expression indicates, that such a search was oftentimes unsuccessful. *Of that sheep*, i. e. on account of having found it. *Than of the ninety and nine, &c.* Not that the lost sheep was more valuable than all the rest or any one of them, but because the interest previously shared among all, was now so concentrated upon the lost one, that all concern for the others seemed to have passed away from the mind. How natural this is, all know who have lost some highly-prized article. *Even so it is not the will, &c.* Of what surpassing beauty and force is this application of the simile. *Will* is here to be taken in the sense of *purpose*, and not of *wish* or *good pleasure*. It is not God's purpose that any of his spiritual children should perish (see John 10 : 27-29), and hence men are to take heed that they despise them not. *Your Father.* In v. 10, *my Father*, for as Alford well remarks, there the dignity of the little ones was asserted, but here the motive directly acting on the conscience of the Christian is urged.

15. Our Lord now enjoins upon his followers the duty of mutual forbear-

14 Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

15 ¶ Moreover, " if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and

*n* Le. 19 : 17; Lu. 17 : 3.

ance and forgiveness. In the preceding context, he cautions against giving offence to others, here he proceeds to speak of the course to be pursued when an offence has been received from a Christian brother. The word *offences* employed in v. 7, and continued in the verb *offend*, in vs. 8, 9, here gives place to the expression *shall trespass*, denoting a more special and active form of injury inflicted upon a brother, the transition being rendered easy and natural by the direction in v. 10, not to despise or look down upon one of Christ's little ones. In conformity with the rules here given, evangelical churches adjust difficulties between brethren, reclaim offenders, and administer such discipline, as may be necessary to the peace and purity of the church. Were the steps here laid down, especially the first, faithfully observed, there would be far less of those dissensions and heart-burnings, which often rend churches asunder, and bring reproach upon the cause of Christ. *Moreover.* The connective used here is the common *but, and also*, marking a transition to another branch of the subject. Some expositors think that this portion of our Lord's discourse was spoken at another time. But the gradation from an offending (vs. 7-14) to an offended brother is very natural (see above), and there can be no doubt of its being a continuation of the same conversation, which grew out of the dispute of the disciples who should be the greatest. *Thy brother*, i. e. Christian brother. *Shall trespass against thee*, i. e. do thee wrong or give offence to thee. *Tell him his fault*; literally, *reprove or admonish him*. The word is often used in the sense of *to refute, convince of wrong* by expostulation, examining, or ques-

tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, <sup>o</sup> thou hast gained thy brother.

16 But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in <sup>p</sup> the mouth of two

<sup>o</sup> Ja. 5: 20; 1 Pe. 3: 1. <sup>p</sup> De. 17: 6, & 19: 15; Jno. 8: 17; 2 Co. 13: 1; He. 10: 28.

tioning. The propriety of its use here, in this first step to reclaim an offending brother, is obvious and striking. It well denotes the kind and friendly spirit with which the reproof was to be administered, and the willingness to hear any explanation, which might serve to extenuate the offence. *Between him and thee alone.* A very important direction, but how often neglected. A mission of peace and reconciliation, if undertaken alone, and in the spirit of Christ, would almost always prove successful in reclaiming an erring Christian brother. But in proportion as publicity is given to the offence or ground of difficulty, the probability of an adjustment on Christian principles diminishes. *If he shall hear thee*, i. e. give heed to your reproof, as becometh a follower of Christ. *Thou hast gained*, &c. Thou hast brought thy brother back to duty, and gained him for the service of Christ and for thyself. The word rendered *hast gained*, is a commercial term, denoting the acquisition of gain as opposed to loss, and its use here implies, that unless the brother had been thus faithfully and kindly dealt with, he would have been lost to Christ and his church.

16. *If he will not hear thee*, i. e. will not listen to your exhortations and reproof. *One or two more of the brethren.* The reason is given in the next clause, *that in the mouth*, &c. See Deut. 19: 15. The presence of these brethren would not only give weight to the efforts made to reclaim the offender, but furnish the church with reliable testimony, on which to base subsequent action, if found necessary. If the difficulty, however, was harmo-

or three witnesses every word may be established.

17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an <sup>q</sup> heathen man and a publican.

<sup>q</sup> Ro. 16: 17; 1 Co. 5: 9; 2 Th. 3: 6, 14; 2 Jo. 10.

nously adjusted, no publicity was to be given to the affair.

17. *If he shall neglect to hear*, i. e. refuse to listen to their remonstrances or exhortations, and prove incorrigible. The word rendered *shall neglect*, is a much stronger expression than that employed in v. 16, having the additional idea of wilful obstinacy, and taking no heed to what was said. *Tell it to the church.* The word *church* has here its primary meaning, a *congregation* or *assembly*, convened in the synagogue for worship. But as the direction runs into after times, it is to be taken in the sense of a congregation of believers, which at first was only one, but as Christianity spread from one country to another, became numerous and local. The use of the article denotes the particular church to which the parties belonged. The design of this step in the process of discipline, was to unite the efforts and prayers of the whole church to reclaim the erring member. *But if*; literally, *but if also*. There is a gradation in the efforts to reclaim him, and in his perverseness in refusing to give the required satisfaction. *Let him be unto thee*, &c. Let him be accounted unworthy of intercourse, as the Jews regarded heathens and publicans. This direction does not imply that the excommunicated person is not to be spoken to, or that no worldly business is to be transacted with him, but simply, that all intimate and fraternal intercourse with him is to cease, until he repents, and renders himself by God's grace, worthy of being received again into Christian fellowship. Compare 1 Cor. 3: 4, 5, 11; 2 Cor. 2: 6, 7; 2 Thess. 3: 14, 15.

18 Verily I say unto you, 'Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.

19 'Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on

r Ch. 16 : 19; Jno. 20 : 23; 1 Co. 5 : 4.

18. In this verse our Lord commits to his church the power to administer discipline, and to inflict or remit such penalties, as may be deemed proper and suitable. *Whatsoever ye shall bind, &c.* Your judicial acts, so far as founded on correct principles and rightly applied, shall be ratified in heaven, and be of binding authority and obligation. Some commentators limit this to the discipline administered by the apostles, who acted under the immediate guidance of the Spirit, and therefore could not err. But while this promise was primarily addressed to them, it cannot be doubted, that it, as well as the formula of discipline in vs. 15-17, was given to the church through all time. With the qualification above given, and doubtless implied by our Lord, the promise that the acts of the church on earth shall be ratified in heaven, may be safely considered as referring to Christian churches in every age. It is worthy of note that, however this may be regarded, whether as addressed to the apostles only, or to the church in general, it destroys all claim to the supremacy which is sought to be conferred on Peter, because of these words being once (16 : 19) addressed to him. Here the promise is given to all the apostles, if not virtually to all Christ's ministers in every age.

19. *If two of you shall agree*; literally, *shall agree in sound, be symphonious*, referring primarily to musical harmony, and then to the union of sentiment and action of those who harmonize thoroughly in their views. This verse teaches that there must be united prayer and harmonious action, in the administration of discipline such as will be ratified in heaven. The words, *if two of you,*

earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, 'it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

s Ch. 5 : 24. t 1 Jo. 3 : 22, & 5 : 14.

shows that excommunication is not to be administered by a single individual, but must be the result of the combined wisdom of at least two of the apostles, for the language here made use of conforms to the fact, that he was addressing the Twelve, who were to establish, organize, and govern the church after his ascension. It is supposed that while engaged in the solemn and important duty of administering reproof, correction, and discipline, they would seek wisdom from above, and our Lord here promises that their request, if preferred in united prayer, shall be granted of his Father which is in heaven. It is evident that the promise here made, must be restricted to the subject, on which our Lord was addressing the apostles, and not taken in a broad, unqualified sense of every thing on which they should agree in prayer. James and John used almost these very words (Mark 10 : 35), in a request of so carnal a nature, that it was rebuked by their Master. What is asked for must be in accordance with the mind of the Spirit, inspiring, exciting, and calling forth the petition, and rendering it acceptable in the sight of God. See N. on 7 : 7. It may be remarked further, that although this promise was made primarily to the apostles, yet it must be regarded as made also to all the ministers of Christ, engaged in promoting the peace and purity of the churches committed to their care, and also to all churches and church judicatories, in the administration of government and discipline.

20. Our Lord now proceeds to give a more general promise of his presence in his church on earth, confirmatory of that made in the preceding verse. *For*



21 ¶ Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? "till seven times?"

u Lu. 17 : 4.

where two or three, &c. The general sentiment is: I am always in the midst of the assemblies of my people, even where only two or three are gathered together. How much more then will my presence be with the church, in her solemn duty of administering discipline, and maintaining the purity and peace of her members. *Two or three.* An expression denoting a very few. *In my name*, i. e. in my service and worship. *In the midst of them*, to inspire their prayers, give them wisdom, and guide them in the discharge of duty. This verse sweeps away all claims to ecclesiastical supremacy, and places the little gathering of two or three disciples, inspired with the love of Christ, upon an equal footing with the most august council which ever convened within the walls of a cathedral. Such councils are useful in settling and determining doctrines, duties, and modes of discipline in the church, but have no power, independent of that which arises from the presence of Christ, promised alike to the assemblage in his name, of such august bodies, or of a few obscure and humble Christians.

21, 22. Thus far in this discourse, our Lord had not spoken particularly of the duty of forgiveness, yet it is implied in the reconciliation referred to in v. 15. Peter, therefore, recurs to this, and inquires respecting the limits of forgiveness. *Then came Peter, &c.* He drew nearer to him in order to make the inquiry. *Till seven times?* The Jewish Rabbins, from Amos 1 : 3, 6, 9, &c., limited forgiveness to three times. Peter used seven, either as a perfect or complete number, or from a recollection of Prov. 24 : 16. He, doubtless, thought that he had reached the mark, if he had not gone beyond it, in employing this full round number. How great must have been his surprise at the

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times :  
\* but, Until seventy times seven.

23 Therefore is the kingdom

æ Ch. 6 : 14 ; Ma. 11 : 25 ; Col. 3 : 13.

reply of Jesus. *I say not unto thee.* This is not my direction. I affix no such limitation to the duty of forgiveness. *Seventy times seven.* As "two or three" in v. 20, was put for a very small, indefinite number, so "seventy times seven" is employed here to express an indefinite, but very large number. Jerome contrasts this answer of our Lord with Lamech's seventy and seven-fold revenge (Gen. 4 : 24). But such verbal resemblances are not of much consequence. It was probably a term of common use. The meaning here is, that no limit was to be affixed to forgiveness, and this is further enforced by the parable of the unforgiving servant, which now follows.

23. *Therefore*, i. e. in view of the duty of unlimited forgiveness. *The kingdom of heaven* refers here to God's dealings with men under the gospel dispensation. In forgiving men their sins, and requiring also in them a like merciful and forgiving spirit, God deals with them as a certain king did with his servants. There is nothing to forbid our belief, that such an occurrence, as is described in this parable, actually took place, but were it not a reality, there is no violation of truth, as illustrations from supposed events are of common use and well understood as such. *Unto a certain king.* "This is the first of the parables in which God appears in the character of a King."—Trench. *Would take account*; literally, *wished to take up together his account*, referring to the idea of mutual settlement. *Of his servants*, i. e. ministers and attendants. In Oriental countries these were oftentimes slaves, but here not necessarily so in the strictest sense. Cyrus, the brother of Artaxerxes, is spoken of by Xenophon as the *doulos*, *slave* of the king. This term, in the same author, is frequently applied to the Persian satraps or governors.

of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

y 2 Ki. 4: 1; Ne. 5: 8.

These *douloi* in the parable seem to have had the charge and disbursement of the king's money, and were called to render up their accounts for settlement.

24. *One which owed, &c.* literally, *a debtor of ten thousand talents.* An indefinite, but immensely large sum is here intended. The talent spoken of was, doubtless, silver. If so, the debt amounted to between *ten and fifteen millions of dollars.* The debtor was a high minister of state, or as some think, a tributary prince, who had withheld the payment of tribute, until it reached this enormous sum. The greatness of his debt, so far beyond his means of payment, forcibly illustrates our indebtedness to God, and hopeless condition, unless partakers of his forgiving grace.

25. *For as much as he had not to pay.* He was not only a delinquent, but so poor, through his prodigality, that he was unable to pay off in full his debt. This made him less worthy of pity, and enhanced the compassion shown in his forgiveness. *Commanded him to be sold.* When the property of the debtor was not sufficient to meet the demands against him, he was himself sold in payment. See Levit. 35: 39; 47; 2 Kings, 4: 1; Isa. 50: 1. This bondage with the Jews terminated at the year of jubilee. *All that he had.* When thus stripped of his possessions, and himself and family sold into slavery, he had truly nothing left to pay the balance of

26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on

the great debt. *And payment to be made* from the money received from the sale, as far as it would go.

26. *Fell down, &c.* He did reverence to his lord, after the manner of Oriental nations. See N. on 2: 2. *Have patience with me.* Grant me indulgence, and wait with patience, and I will endeavor to pay the whole debt.

27. *Moved with compassion.* See N. on 9: 36. *Loosed him* from the arrest under which he was held for the debt. *Forgave* (i. e. remitted) *him the debt.* The clemency and the tenderheartedness of this good king, illustrates the goodness and forbearance of God towards sinners. But every comparison drawn from human conduct, is but a faint illustration of the great debt which we owe him, and our utter inability to pay it. His long-suffering and compassion are beyond the power of language to express, or the imagination to conceive.

28. *But the same servant went out* from his lord's presence. He was now reinstated in his post of honor and authority. *One of his fellow-servants.* This servant was his inferior in station, and yet as belonging to the same master was his fellow-servant. It would appear that on his way from the presence of his lord, he fell in with this debtor, and with a hardness of heart untouched by the generous treatment he had himself received, grasped him by the throat, and in harsh language demanded instant payment. In what

him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

29 And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31 So when his fellow-servants

strong contrast, is his conduct made to stand with that of his humane lord. *An hundred pence.* According to the value of the *denarius* or penny in the time of Josephus (see N. on 20 : 2), his debt was about fifteen dollars. How insignificant in comparison with ten thousand talents, his own enormous debt which had just been forgiven him. And yet this but faintly expresses the degree of difference between the offences of our fellow-men towards us, and the sins we every day commit against God. He forgives us much, whereas we are required to forgive but little. *Took him by the throat* in the most violent and hard-heated manner. The usage of antiquity allowed the creditor to inflict personal chastisement upon his debtor. It is but a short time since our own laws have been so *humanized*, that the creditor has no power to incarcerate a fellow-citizen for debt, as though he had committed a crime against the community in which he dwelt.

29. *And his fellow-servant, &c.* He besought mercy at the hands of his inexorable creditor, in precisely the same humble, supplicating terms, which the wicked servant had himself used a short time before. This itself ought to have reminded him of his duty to forgive, as he had been forgiven.

30. *Would not show him favor or grant him any respite. But went, &c.* He took the usual legal steps for the recovery of his debt, by bringing the debtor before the magistrate, by whom he was consigned to prison. See N. on 5 : 25, 26. *Till he should pay the debt.* See 5 : 27.

saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

33 Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-

31. *So when his fellow-servants, &c.* Here the similitude is not to be pressed too far, since it is not necessary for God to be informed of the unforgiving temper of men, nor does he require his people to become informers one of another. The incidents are necessary to give completeness to the picture, and make the narrative consistent. *Were very sorry.* It was their lord's prerogative to be *wroth* (see v. 34); they were *grieved* at the unworthy conduct of their fellow-servant. *Told unto their lord; more literally, made their lord fully acquainted with.*

32. *Had called him* into his presence. *O thou wicked servant; literally, wicked servant.* He had now developed his true character, and was addressed by his lord in fitting terms of indignation. *All that debt great as it was. Because thou desiredst it.* It was his piteous appeal which moved his lord's compassion. In a qualified sense, it was therefore the cause of his forgiveness. We must guard against inferring from this feature of the parable, that the real Christian will ever be left to such conduct, as to forfeit his adoption into God's family, and place him beyond the pale of forgiveness. The parable pursues the line of human conduct, to illustrate the sin and consequences of an unforgiving temper.

33. *Shouldst not thou* (following my example and incited thereby to clemency) *have had compassion on thy fellow-servant?* The argument *a fortiori* (see N. on 5 : 15) is here employed: If I forgave you that great debt, *much more* should you have forgiven your fellow-servant the trifle he owed you.

servant, even as I had pity on thee?

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

*Had compassion—had pity.* The same word is employed in both instances in the original.

34. *Was wroth.* His anger was now enkindled at such great wickedness, and without listening to any thing further from his lips, he *delivered him to the jailers*, for so the word translated *tormentors* or *torturers*, would be better translated. As jailers presided over the confinement of imprisoned debtors, it will be readily seen, how natural the designation here given them. It cannot be denied, however, that passages are found in ancient authors (see Livy, 2 : 23), which seem clearly to indicate, that a debtor was liable to corporal punishment, as well as to close confinement. But it is not well to press this meaning upon the present passage, for that torture is not here referred to, but a state of confinement, attended of course with privation and suffering, is evident from the next clause, *till he should pay*, &c. It is unnatural to suppose that a debtor would be subject to continual torture until his debt was paid, but not that he should be imprisoned until that time. However this might be, one thing was true, his condition was remediless. He could never be restored to his lord's favor. Mercy had been shown to him and abused. The demand of justice was now upon him, which he could never satisfy. Thus will it be with the sinner, who abuses God's forbearance, and is consigned to the abode of the lost. The offer of mercy is no longer made to him, and he can never satisfy the demand of eternal justice. Voluntary obedience he will never render to the divine law, and if he did do this, present obedience cannot atone for past disobedience. His debt can never be paid. He will never

25 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

z Pr. 21 : 13 ; ch. 6 : 12 ; Ma. 11 : 26 ; Ja. 2 : 13.

be freed from his prison-house of suffering and despair. On this passage the views of Olshausen are very erroneous. He considers it as teaching in connection with 1 Pet. 3 : 19, that after death, there is plainly a deliverance of some from the prison, and that it does by no means follow, that all who do not die in the Lord, will on this account sink into eternal condemnation. If this view be true, it may be said of some : Blessed are the dead who do *not* die in the Lord, for whatever may be the length of their sufferings in the future world, in comparison with the *eternity* of bliss to follow, it will be as nothing, and deserving of no mention or thought.

35. *So likewise, &c.* This is the application of the parable to God's treatment of such as manifest a revengeful, unforgiving temper. Alford says, that the expression, *my Father*, is more solemn and denunciatory than the declaration, *your Father*, in 6 : 14, 15. *From your hearts.* Forgiveness in words only is of no value. It must come from the heart to be acceptable in the sight of God. If the feelings go not with the words, there is the double sin of retaining an unforgiving temper, and of hypocritically pretending to a spirit of forgiveness not really possessed. *Every one his brother.* The duty of forgiveness is of common obligation. It is binding on every man who has occasion to exercise it. It has primary reference to Christian brethren, but is to be exercised towards all who have offended us, and ask our forgiveness. This parable, as a moral painting, perfect and complete in all its parts, is unrivalled. Its beauty of diction is also enhanced by the affecting truth, which it is designed to illustrate, viz. God's wondrous love to man, and the obligation thereby resting on all to



## CHAPTER XIX.

AND it came to pass, <sup>a</sup>that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judea, beyond Jordan :

*a* Ma. 10 : 1 ; Jno. 10 : 40.

love one another, and practice mutual forgiveness. It teaches that heaven can never be attained by the revengeful, the cruel, the hard-hearted. None but those who forgive as they have been forgiven, can be admitted into that place of love, purity, and happiness.

## CHAPTER XIV.

1, 2. JESUS BEYOND JORDAN. *Perea.* Mark 10 : 1.

1. *He departed from Galilee, &c.* This refers to our Lord's last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, and thence to the region east of Jordan. A considerable lapse of time took place therefore between his last discourse in the preceding chapter, and the resumption of his history on the confines of Judea beyond Jordan. During this time the Seventy were instructed and sent forth (Luke 10 : 1-16), after which he passed through the Samaritan country, on his way to Jerusalem to the feast of Tabernacles (Luke 9 : 51-56), and healed the ten lepers (Luke 17 : 11-19). While at Jerusalem, there took place the incidents of the woman taken in adultery (John 8 : 2-11); his reproof of the unbelieving Jews (John 8 : 12-39); the instruction of the lawyer, as to who was his neighbor (Luke 10 : 25-37); his visit to the house of Martha and Mary in Bethany (Luke 10 : 38-42); the return of the Seventy (Luke 10 : 17-24); the healing of the blind man on the Sabbath, and the discussion resulting therefrom (John 9 : 1-41); his presence in Jerusalem at the feast of Tabernacles, and retirement from the rage of the Jews to the east of Jordan (John 10 : 22-40); the raising of Lazarus (John 11 : 46); the counsel of Caiaphas, and the determination to put Jesus to death (John 11 : 47-53); and his retirement to a city of Ephraim (John 11 : 54).

2 <sup>b</sup> And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

3 ¶ The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a

*b* Ch. 12 : 15.

The thread of the narrative is at that point here resumed by Matthew, who says that as he passed beyond Jordan, great multitudes followed him, and many were healed. After this there is again a chasm in Matthew's narration, which is to be filled up by several incidents and occurrences in Luke, not noted by the other Evangelists, such as the healing of the infirm woman on the Sabbath (Luke 13 : 10-17); his warning against Herod (Luke 13 : 31-33); the incidents attending his entertainment on the Sabbath by a chief Pharisee (Luke 14 : 1-24); the parables of the lost sheep, &c. (Luke, chapters 15 and 16); of the importunate widow, the Pharisee and publican (Luke 18 : 1-14). These incidents are all related of him, while remaining at Perea, a region of country, as the name imports, *beyond* Jordan.

3-12. PRECEPTS RESPECTING DIVORCE. *Perea.* Mark 10 : 2-12.

3. This visit of the Pharisees to ensnare him took place probably soon after he pronounced the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. *Tempting him.* See N. on 16 : 1. *Is it lawful, &c.* Our Lord had asserted on another occasion (Luke 16 : 18) the unlawfulness of divorce. The school of Hillel admitted divorce for the most trivial reasons, but that of Shammai, on the other hand, maintained that the only ground for this was adultery. In proposing this question, his enemies hoped that his reply would embroil him with one or the other of these schools. But knowing their plan, instead of replying directly to their question Jesus referred them to what Moses himself said on this subject. This is seen very clearly in the parallel passage in Mark 10 : 2-5. *Is it lawful;* literally, *is it possible,* referring to what is morally possible, or which can be done consistently with

man to put away his wife for every cause?

4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, 'that he which made *them* at the  
c Ge. 1 : 27, & 5 : 2; Mal. 2 : 15.

what is right and proper. *To put away*, i. e. to divorce from the marriage tie. *Every cause*, i. e. any cause or charge whatsoever. This use of the Greek word translated *every*, is found in Rom. 3 : 20; Gal. 2 : 16. According to Mark, the question of the Pharisees had reference to the point whether divorce was at all allowable. The answer of our Lord is shaped in both Evangelists, to meet the form in which the questions were proposed. It is evident that Matthew's account implies the previous inquiry found in Mark, and that divorce was allowable.

4, 5. *Have ye not read.* The question is rhetorically put to imply, that the passage referred to must surely have been read by them. *Made them male and female* (see Gen. 1 : 27), i. e. made them as a pair not to be separated. They were made for each other through the term of their natural life, and this showed God's intention that the same indissoluble law of marriage should be observed by their posterity. Some think that reference is had by implication, to the previous unity of the male and female in Adam. As the woman existed in Adam before her creation from him, and they were thus *one*, so the marriage rite brings them virtually into that same state of unity, from which they cannot be disunited, without violating, as it were, the very laws of their being. So Alford explains Gen. 1 : 27, "*He made them* (man, as a race) *male* (not a male) *and female.*" The argument against divorce is essentially the same, in whichever of these two ways the passage is interpreted. *For this cause* (viz. the fact that God intended that the two sexes should live together in pairs) *shall a man leave* (literally, *leave wholly, forsake entirely*), &c. This quotation is from Gen. 2 : 24, where, it will be seen, that the

beginning made them male and female,

5 And said, <sup>d</sup>For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his  
d Ge. 2 : 24; Ma. 10 : 5-9; Ep. 5 : 31.

words were spoken by Adam, of course under a prophetic inspiration, as our Lord attributes them to his Creator. *Shall cleave*; literally, *shall be glued*, a strong metaphor, showing how inseparable was to be the marriage tie. *And they twain shall be* (i. e. become) *one flesh* (i. e. one person). This was the original marriage arrangement. The pair were to be united, as it were, in one body, having inseparable interests, aims, enjoyments, duties. The argument from this is of overwhelming force, that such a constitution of the marriage relation is to continue through life. Death only, which dissolves all earthly relations, will justify the surviving party in contracting a second marriage, until which event they are *one flesh*, ONE MAN. The words, *they twain*, are not in the original Hebrew, and seem to have been inserted by the Septuagint translators, to form an antithesis with the words *one flesh*. The sense is not changed or impaired by their omission, as the subject, *man and wife*, is easily understood in the original.

6. *Wherefore they are*, &c. This is the inevitable inference from the original constitution of the marriage relation. How opposed to this are many of the legislative enactments, by which divorces are granted so freely in our day. *What therefore God*, &c. Our Lord regarded this original law of marriage as of universal obligation. The relation was one of divine ordination. When once assumed, it was not to be terminated by any human enactment. Nothing could be more conclusive than this argument of our Savior against divorce. *Hath joined together*; literally, *hath yoked together*, a figurative expression of universal use in respect to the bonds of matrimony.

The Pharisees having been foiled in

wife: and 'they twain shall be one flesh?

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

7 They say unto him, <sup>f</sup> Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

8 He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your

*e* 1 Co. 6: 6, & 7: 2. *f* De. 24: 1; ch. 5: 31.

their first question, interpose an objection founded on the permission granted by Moses to give a bill of divorce. Their objection shows that they correctly apprehended the reply of Jesus, as disallowing divorce in every form. *Why did Moses, &c.* The point of the objection is this: If the marriage tie was so indissoluble, why did Moses permit divorces, commanding only that a writing of divorcement be given. How is this discrepancy between the original law in Eden, and the Mosaic law to be reconciled? Our Lord's reply is given in the next verse. It should be noted that, what was only a permission on the part of Moses, is spoken of as a *command*, by these cavillers. In the next verse, our Lord corrects their error, by substituting the word *suffered*, *permitted*.

8. *Moses, because, &c.* See N. on 5: 31. The state of the times, and the custom of the surrounding countries, rendered it, in the estimation of Moses, inexpedient to debar the Israelites from the power of divorce. Marriage was treated by him as a civil institution, and thus he granted indulgences, which Christ, who came to magnify and restore the law to its spirituality and power, and to annul dead and useless forms, very properly revoked. The words *because of the hardness*, would be more correctly translated, *in reference to, or having regard to the hardness*, i. e. seeing your hardness of heart, he per-

mitted divorces to be granted more freely, than he otherwise would have done. *Hardness of heart*, which would have brooked no restraint of the kind here referred to, and which would have vented itself in the ill-usage, if not the murder, of the wife, from whom no legal separation could be effected. It was a lesser evil, which Moses was constrained to permit, as our Lord himself says, through the hardness and stubbornness of their hearts. *Your hearts.* The same hardness of heart characterized the people then, as in the time of Moses. The Mosaic dispensation, in this and several other respects, contemplated this abiding hardness of heart in the nation, and its laws were framed accordingly. *But from the beginning*, when the marriage relation was first constituted. *It was not so*, i. e. men were not allowed to put away their wives.

9 <sup>g</sup> And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away, doth commit adultery.

10 ¶ His disciples say unto him, <sup>h</sup> If the case of the man be

*g* Ch. 5: 32; Ma. 10: 11; Lu. 16: 18; 1 Co. 7: 10, 11. *h* Pr. 21: 19.

mitted divorces to be granted more freely, than he otherwise would have done. *Hardness of heart*, which would have brooked no restraint of the kind here referred to, and which would have vented itself in the ill-usage, if not the murder, of the wife, from whom no legal separation could be effected. It was a lesser evil, which Moses was constrained to permit, as our Lord himself says, through the hardness and stubbornness of their hearts. *Your hearts.* The same hardness of heart characterized the people then, as in the time of Moses. The Mosaic dispensation, in this and several other respects, contemplated this abiding hardness of heart in the nation, and its laws were framed accordingly. *But from the beginning*, when the marriage relation was first constituted. *It was not so*, i. e. men were not allowed to put away their wives.

9. See N. on 5: 32. Mark (10: 10) says that this was addressed to his disciples in the house, in answer to further inquiries made by them on this subject.

10. *If the case of the man, &c.* There is much doubt as to the precise meaning of the word rendered *case*, which is the same as the one in v. 3 rendered *cause*, and which some think refers to the same thing, in the sense of a *justifying reason of divorce*. Alford, with some other recent commentators, explains it of the original ground or principle of the relationship of man and



so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry.

11 But he said unto them, 'All *men* cannot receive this saying, save *they* to whom it is given.

12 For there are some eunuchs,

† 1 Co. 7: 2, 7, 9, 17.

wife, as declared by our Lord in vs. 4-6. But it seems more natural to refer it to the case or condition of a man, thus joined indissolubly to a woman who proves to be unworthy, and ill-adapted to render him happy. Unless the power of divorce from such a woman were possessed, it was, in their estimation, preferable not to marry at all. The Jewish prejudices of the disciples were continually leading them to false conclusions. Their language was not only that of their countrymen, but of many at the present day, who bring forward ill-assorted marriages and conjugal feuds consequent thereon, as a reason why divorces should be freely given.

11. *All men cannot receive* (literally, *give place to*, i. e. assent to) *this saying* of the disciples, that it is not good to marry. Very few will voluntarily assume celibacy, the natural inclination of men being towards the marriage state. *Save they to whom it is given* (of God), i. e. who are possessed of such a physical temperament, and such self-control, as to overcome this desire for the marriage state. Even with such, as our Lord goes on to state in the following verse, the natural desires and inclinations would prove too strong to be overcome, at least in many instances, were not the aid of bodily mutilation resorted to. Olshausen refers the words, *to whom it is given*, to a special work of grace, or the grace of continency, which is not given to all.

12. The general sentiment of this verse is, that those persons only, who have been brought into the condition of eunuchs, or who have so mastered their natural inclinations, as to have rendered themselves insensible to all de-

which were so born from *their* mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and <sup>k</sup>there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom

‡ 1 Co. 7: 32, 34, & 9: 5, 15.

sire for marriage, will abstain from that relation. The conjugal relation will be entered upon, as it was intended to be, by the great mass of mankind, and it is neither to be avoided nor abrogated, because of the evils which, in solitary cases, are incidental to it. *For there are some eunuchs* (literally, *bed-keepers*). This class of persons were very numerous among the Orientals, in ancient as well as in modern times. They kept the harems of kings and great men. They were the confidential servants of their masters, and oftentimes rose to the highest offices and honors, being intrusted especially with such services as required fidelity. *Which were born*, &c. The first class referred to are those, who are naturally incapacitated for the marriage state. *Which were made eunuchs*, &c. This second class, who were made incapable of marrying by physical mutilation, are the only real eunuchs, the first and last class being so called by a figure of speech. *Which have made themselves*, &c. This does not refer to self-mutilation, but to such a mastery of all inclination for marriage, that like Paul (see 1 Cor. 7: 26), the persons referred to abstain from entering that state, in order the more efficiently to labor for the cause of Christ. In almost every age of the church, especially when pioneer missionary work is to be performed, it seems desirable that some of Christ's ministers shall, for a time at least, remain unmarried. Such persons, in the strong metaphorical language of our Savior, denoting the mastery over their desires to which they have attained, are represented as having made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. Some, however, like Origen, understood this passage as lit-



of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.

13 ¶ Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put *his* hands on them,

l Ma. 10: 13; Lu. 18: 15.

eral, and having the force of a duty from the following clause, *he that is able*, &c. But no license can be drawn from this for the self-mutilation to which Origen submitted, nor for the law of celibacy, which the Romish church imposes on her priesthood. *He that is able* (through ascendancy over his natural inclinations to enter the marriage state) *to receive it*, i. e. the saying spoken of in v. 11. *Let him receive it*. This is a permission and not an injunction. The sense is, that if a man thinks he can subserve the interests of Christ's kingdom better by remaining unmarried, and can discipline himself to voluntarily abstain from marriage, he is permitted thus to do. It was a remark of Neander, the more valuable, as Alford observes, from his having lived a single life, that the reprimand of the servant who buried his talent for its safe keeping, shows the estimate which our Savior put upon celibacy, when entered upon through fear of the trials and temptations of the marriage state.

13-15. JESUS RECEIVES AND BLESSES LITTLE CHILDREN. *Perea*. Mark 10: 13-16; Luke 18: 15-17. The best harmonists concur in placing the bringing of the little children to Christ, next in order to the discourse on the law of marriage.

13. *Then were there brought*, &c. They were probably brought by believing parents, in order to receive his blessing, the sign of which, in this case, was the imposition of his hands. See Gen. 48: 14. *And pray*, i. e. invoke God's blessing upon them. *Rebuked them*. The disciples were unwilling that his graver instructions should be interrupted, by what seemed to them so

and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for <sup>m</sup> of such is the kingdom of heaven.

15 And he laid *his* hands

m Ch. 18: 3.

comparatively unimportant, as laying his hands on little children. They may have feared, too, that it would prove a troublesome tax upon their Master's time and attention.

14. *But Jesus said*, or as Luke relates it, *called them unto him and said*. The parents being thus rebuked by the disciples, at which Mark says that Jesus was much displeased, were probably turning to go away, when, in tones of heavenly compassion, and words unequalled for tenderness and true moral sublimity, he invited them to come near. *Suffer little children*; literally, *suffer the little children*, referring to those mentioned in the preceding verse. His gracious words are, however, of general application to the children of all believing parents, and indeed to all who in childhood come to him. *For of such*, i. e. composed of such and their like. There can be no doubt that the kingdom of heaven is composed in part of those, who die in the years of infancy and early childhood. Reference may also be had to those having the disposition of little children, referred to in 18: 3, on which see Note. There is no direct proof from this passage that all infants are saved, although we have no reason to doubt from the nature of the case, as well as from inferences drawn from this and other passages of God's word, that infants are saved through the grace of Jesus Christ. *Kingdom of heaven*, i. e. the true church of Christ composed of persons having the child-like disposition here referred to.

15. *He laid his hands*, &c. Mark (10: 16) says, "he took them up in his arms." His condescension and love exceeded the request of the parents,

on them, and departed thence.

16 ¶ "And behold, one came and said unto him, 'Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?'

α Ma. 10 : 17 ; Lu. 18 : 18.

which was only that he should "put his hands upon them." We can hardly doubt that these children in due time, by their personal acceptance of Christ, ratified this act of their believing parents, and were themselves active, self-denying members of the church. The readiness of Christ to receive and bless them, is an encouragement to all believers in subsequent time, to bring and consecrate their offspring to their Savior and Redeemer. *Departed thence*, i. e. from that part of Perea, where this incident took place, for he abode still in the region beyond Jordan.

16-30. THE RICH YOUNG MAN. *Perea*. Mark 10 : 17-31 ; Luke 18 : 18-30.

16. *And behold there came*. This took place according to Mark, when he had "gone forth into the way," on his journey towards Jerusalem. This young ruler was a person of great wealth, refinement, and excellence of character, as is seen from the circumstances here related of him. He was so desirous of interrogating Jesus, that he came running to him, and so impressed with his high character as a religious teacher, that he kneeled to him, according to the Oriental custom of prostration before a superior (see Mark 10 : 17). *Good Master*. Moral goodness is not so much referred to here, as eminence in the office of *teacher* ; for such is the signification of the word here rendered *Master*. *What good thing*, &c. This question was, doubtless, proposed in all sincerity, and with a determination to do whatever was enjoined upon him, although the sequel shows, that he was not equal to the self-denial imposed upon him by our Savior. He asked what *good* thing he should do, as though good works were all that was necessary to secure his admission to eternal life. He was evidently a Pharisee, and having done all which he

17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is none good but one, that is God* : but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

ο Lu. 10 : 25.

deemed the law of God required, was impelled by a vague sense of something yet wanting to the completion of a perfect character, and therefore proposed this question to Jesus, *in hopes* that he would either be pronounced perfect, or informed what he should do to render certain his future happiness. *Eternal life*, i. e. happiness in a future state, of which *life* is the representative, just as *death* is the term used to denote the loss of the soul in the eternal world.

17. *Why callest thou me good*. Christ does not here deny his title to the epithet *good*, but rebukes the inconsistency of the young ruler in pronouncing him good, and yet regarding him merely as a human teacher. The sentiment is this: You regard me only as an eminent teacher. Why then do you address me in language applicable to God only? Compared with God, there is no one good. All human excellence is as nothing. See Mark 10 : 18. In this question our Lord also in part replies to the inquiry of the young man. There is no being good but God. No human being is so perfect and observant of the divine law, as to deserve the appellation *good*. Hence to no good thing which you can do, is eternal life promised as a reward. In a very ancient and well sustained reading, the question in Matthew takes this form : *Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One is the good*. Olshausen conjectures this to be the correct reading. To decide this, would require an appeal to manuscripts and versions, which are not accessible to scholars in this country. *But if thou wilt enter*, &c. If you are sincere and earnest in your aspirations after eternal life. *Keep the commandments*. In this way alone could eternal life be attained, on the ground of personal merit. The Mosaic

18 He saith unto him, Which ?  
Jesus said, <sup>p</sup> Thou shalt do no  
murder, Thou shalt not commit

*p* Ex. 20 : 13 ; De. 5 : 17.

precepts are here referred to, especially the ten commandments (see Mark 10 : 19).

18. The ruler, supposing that Jesus referred to some command, which he had through ignorance or inadvertence neglected, inquires *which* (literally, *what ones*) of the commandments he was to observe. We cannot suppose that his inquiry was based on the belief, that a part only of God's commandments were to be kept. His previous conduct, from his youth up, shows that he considered the whole law as of binding obligation. *Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, &c.* These examples are from the second table, but virtually comprise the whole moral law. Perhaps our Lord refers to this part of the law, because in the trial of obedience which he was about to impose upon the young man, he intended to show that the spirit of the laws, even of the second table, he was far from having kept. So De Wette remarks, that our Lord gives this enumeration, to bring out the self-righteous spirit of the young ruler, which he from the first saw in him. In respect to the command, *thou shalt do no murder*, see N. on 5 : 21-26. *Thou shalt not commit adultery*. See N. on 5 : 27-32. *Thou shalt not steal*. The spirit of this command is not only against our taking what does not belong to us, but retaining in our possession that which should be surrendered up to the rightful owner, or keeping back from another his just dues. All the varieties of sharp trading, by which, through misrepresentation or concealment of defects in the article to be vended, a fictitious value is given it ; every act of overreaching, cheating, defrauding, embezzlement, is strictly prohibited in this commandment. Nor is the overt act alone forbidden. As our Lord defined murder, and adultery, to consist in causeless anger and impure desires, so theft, in its spirit, is

adultery, Thou shalt not steal,  
Thou shalt not bear false witness,  
19 <sup>q</sup> Honour thy father and *thy*

*q* Ch. 15 : 4.

the desire to appropriate to our own use that which belongs to another. In what a sweep of condemnation, does this one commandment involve men, especially in the great business relations of life, where the desire for gain too often swallows up all honesty of dealing, and causes men to look upon the property of their fellow-men as legitimate prey, provided it can be secured without any civil misdemeanor exposing them to the arm of the law. *Thou shalt not bear false witness*. See N. on 5 : 33-37.

19. *Honor thy father and thy mother*. Show them due reverence in word and deed. Share with them, if necessary, your means of support. Render them comfortable in their old age. Let no unkindness on your part, pierce their souls like an arrow, and bring down their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. An aged parent has peculiar claims on the kindness and sympathy of his children. He has outlived his generation. From many of the sources of earthly comfort, he is cut off by bodily infirmities. The grasshopper has become a burden to him (Eccles. 12 : 5). The powers of his mind have become enfeebled. How unworthy is the conduct of that person, who can speak harshly to his aged parent in such circumstances, deprive him of the comforts and enjoyments which old age craves, banish him from the social circle, and keep him, as it were, a prisoner in the seclusion of his own chamber. How many, it is to be feared, violate in spirit, if not in letter, this first commandment with promise. *Thou shalt love thy neighbor, &c.* This is the summing up of the spirit and essence of the laws of the second table. On the meaning of neighbor, see N. on 5 : 43, also our Lord's parable of the good Samaritan, where he teaches us the true meaning of this expression. *As thyself*. This does not imply that

mother: and, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept

r Le. 19: 13; ch. 22: 39; Ro. 13: 9; Ga. 5: 14; Ja. 2: 8.

we are to neglect our own interests for those of another, or share our necessary means of subsistence, with every chance comer. In the nature of the case, we are to provide first for our own support and that of our families, for by thus doing we shall be the better able to help others in the time of their extremity. The neglect of our own affairs for those of others, would render us incapable of serving our fellow-men, and soon make us burdens upon the community. The law here laid down is opposed to selfishness, and to a cold-hearted indifference to the wants of others. It demands the exercise of charity in behalf of the destitute and the suffering, and teaches us to sympathize in all the griefs and afflictions of our fellow-men, so far as the scope of our observation and influence may extend.

20. *All these things have I kept, &c.* He had been a strict observer of the outward forms of the law, but of its spirit he was ignorant, or he would never have made this self-righteous and confident reply. But although self-righteous he was no hypocrite, and hence our Lord looked upon him with far different emotions, than he did upon the hypocritical Pharisees (see Mark 10: 21). *From my youth*, i. e. from early youth. He had been religiously inclined from a very early age. His morals had been irreproachable. No one supposed him to be other than a good man, beloved of God and an heir of heaven. *What lack I yet?* This question was put in sincerity, and with a determination, doubtless, to do whatever was required from so eminent a teacher. He little thought that his lack of duty constituted a chasm, which could only be filled by giving his whole property to the poor, and personally dedicating himself to the service of Jesus Christ.

VOL. I.—11

from my youth up: what lack I yet?

21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, 'go and sell that

s Ch. 6: 20; Lu. 12: 33, & 16: 9; Ac. 2: 45, & 4: 34, 35; 1 Ti. 6: 18, 19.

21. *Jesus said unto him.* Mark (10: 21) says, "that Jesus beholding him loved him." He felt an interest in one whose life had been externally so correct, and who seemed to be so sincere an inquirer after truth. *If thou wilt be perfect*, i. e. fully conform thyself to God's law, and become an heir of eternal life. The perfection here spoken of is not absolute but comparative. God only is absolutely perfect. But in a less degree and one approximating thereto, men also may be said to be perfect. See 5: 48. *Go and sell that thou hast.* From the knowledge which Christ had of this young man's heart, he saw fit to impose on him this sacrifice of his worldly possessions. With all his external respect for the precepts of the law, his heart was on his great wealth, and for that, as it appears, he was willing to sacrifice his hopes of eternal life. Our Lord therefore struck at the root of his master passion, and required an unreserved surrender of all his possessions, and, in addition, his personal attendance on his ministry. *Give to the poor.* With all his strict regards to the outward demands of the law, he had perhaps been so penurious, as seldom to have given any thing to the poor around him. He may have looked down upon them as unworthy of his notice. But now he is required to convert his great possessions into money, and give it all to those despised persons, upon whom he had hitherto scarcely deigned to look. Had he been required to found some splendid charity, or to build a beautiful and expensive synagogue, he might have yielded obedience, but to give all his property to the poor, was too repulsive to his feelings to be listened to a moment. We are not to infer from Christ's direction to this young ruler, that every believer is thus to sell his possessions, and distribute



thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me.

22 But when the young man

them to the poor. Yet the same spirit of love and self-sacrifice, which was required of the young ruler, is demanded of every follower of Christ. *Treasure in heaven.* This is put in contrast with his earthly possession. See N. on 6: 20. *Come and follow me*, i. e. become my disciple. See Mark 4: 20. Mark (10: 21) adds, *take up the cross*, which would be well understood by the young man, as denoting self-denial and suffering. But it was not this which caused him to go away sorrowful, so much as his being called to part with his great possessions. Olshausen finds in this twofold direction a negative side, deliverance from the world; and a positive side, union with Christ.

22. *Young man.* The original word is used of young men in the prime of manhood up to forty years of age. The expression, *from my youth up* (v. 20), seems to indicate that he was at least upwards of thirty years of age. *That saying*, viz. that he must part with his wealth. *He went away sorrowing.* This shows how severe was the conflict in this young man between the love of the world and of Christ. But the former prevailed, and he went away sad and dejected, that a test of obedience was given him requiring such an enormous sacrifice. Some think that our Lord's words to this young man were not without good results, and that he subsequently yielded obedience, and became a disciple. But we have no intimation of this in the New Testament, and the declaration of Christ respecting the great obstacles in the way of the salvation of rich men, would seem to imply its truth and verification in the history of this young man. *For he had*, &c. This is given as the reason why he turned away from Jesus. What multitudes of the young and rich have followed his example, when by divine grace they have been brought to the

heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

23 ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you,

point of making a decision between Christ and the world. The words, *for he had*, &c. in the original denote continued and permanent possession. He was not one who had suddenly become rich, and therefore liable as suddenly to become poor, but his estate was one which had been his, at least, for some time previous.

23. *Then said Jesus*, &c. Luke (16: 24) connects this saying directly with the sorrowful departure of the young man, and Mark adds that he looked about him, as if the incident was of more than ordinary interest. *Shall hardly.* The collocation of the words in the original conveys the thought more forcibly and clearly: *Hardly will a rich man enter*, i. e. his entrance into the kingdom of heaven will be attended with the extremest difficulty. It is hard to persuade a rich man to give up all for Christ, and when he has professedly done this, he is beset through life with sore temptations, from which those in more humble circumstances are exempt. Riches beget inordinate pride, self-esteem, love of display, indifference to the interests of others, and, worse than all, an absorbing, all-consuming desire for the acquisition of more wealth. The rich are apt to feel that nothing is of any moment, beyond the means requisite for the gratification of their worldly desires. They have no relish for the treasures of heaven. They are not brought by the ills and afflictions of life, to the foot of the cross to sue for mercy. There are many rich men in the church of Christ, who furnish eminent examples of true godliness, but the great majority of them professed religion, while in the humble circumstances of their youth. It is a fact, no less awful than true, that seldom is a man found, after he has come into the possession of great wealth, who is willing to forsake all for

That 'a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

t Ch. 13: 22; Ma. 10: 24; 1 Co. 1: 26;  
1 Ti. 6: 9, 10.

Christ, and who does not betray the most callous indifference to the wants of his soul. The declaration of our Lord respecting the almost insuperable difficulties in the way of the conversion and salvation of the rich, has been verified in the history of the church down to the present time.

24. We are told in Mark, that the disciples were astonished at the words of our Savior, and that he then limited his remark to those who trusted in riches, and made them their chief good. But inasmuch as it is the nature of riches to beget this inordinate trust in them, and this desire for greater possessions, the limitation, as has been well remarked by Bloomfield, scarcely lessens the difficulty. *It is easier.* This does not imply that the thing here spoken of could ever take place. The expression is equivalent to: *It is a greater impossibility for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.* The expression is a proverbial one, common in the East (the word *elephant* being sometimes thus employed), denoting absolute impossibility, as far as human power was concerned. The surmise of some, that the Greek word denoting *a cable or rope*, is the true reading, has no support from MS. authority. Equally unfounded is that explanation, which refers the *needle's eye*, to a small side gate, through which men passed, but too small for the camel to pass through. No better representation of an impossibility could be made than the attempt to pass a camel, one of the largest and most ungainly of animals, through the eye of a needle, which is one of the smallest of orifices.

25 When his disciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?

26 But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but "with God all things are possible.

u Ge. 18: 14; Job 42: 2; Je. 32: 17; Zec. 8: 6;  
Lu. 1: 37, & 18: 27.

25. The astonishment of the disciples was excited beyond measure, at the declaration of Christ. *Were exceedingly amazed*; literally, *were driven out of their senses*; *were altogether astounded.* *Who then can be saved?* i. e. what rich man can be saved? for the question is properly limited by the context to this class of persons. But inferentially and perhaps in the minds of the disciples, it included every man who had an attachment to wealth, whether in actual possession of it or not. Rich men were doubtless regarded by the disciples, as in the main very honorable and worthy. That such insuperable obstacles should lie in the way of their salvation, was to them strange and amazing, and when Jesus capped the climax by the utterance of the proverb, that it was easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God, they cried out in astonishment, *Who then* (of this class of persons) *can be saved?* It should be borne in mind, that the disciples had not yet fully given up the idea of a temporal Messianic kingdom, under which they themselves hoped to possess great wealth and honor.

26. *Beheld them*; literally, *having fixed his eyes upon them*, as is done, when one is about to utter some mighty and important truth. *With man*, i. e. as far as human power or volition is concerned. Here the necessity of divine regenerating influence, resulting from the weakness of the flesh, is distinctly intimated. *This*, i. e. the salvation of rich men. *All things* which do not involve a moral impossibility. Great emphasis is here given to the previous declaration of the difficulties in

27 ¶ Then answered Peter, and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

α Ma. 10: 28; Lu. 18: 28.

the way of a rich man's entering into the kingdom of heaven. He can only be saved by an Omnipotence, that can achieve all things except moral impossibilities. But what is true of the rich is essentially true of every class of men. No man of himself, whatever may be his station, talents, or influence, can effect in his heart the great moral change necessary to salvation. It must be done by the regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit.

27. *Then answered Peter.* This disciple frequently acted as spokesman for the rest, who were his juniors in years. He now waves all further inquiry respecting difficulties in the way of rich men's salvation, and recurs again to the young man, who could not persuade himself to give up all for Christ. From his conduct he takes occasion to inquire, what should be their reward, for having given up all for his sake. This shows the connection of these verses with the preceding context. Although Peter's question betrayed the lurking of a worldly spirit and temper, yet our Savior knowing the depths of his disciples' affection for him, and their readiness to do all he required, returned a most frank and cheering answer. The reward implied in the question, *what shall we have therefore?* had primary reference, doubtless, to reward in heaven, as it seems to be based on the expression, *treasure in heaven*, in v. 21. But it is probable that Peter and his fellow disciples, as has been intimated, had lingering hopes of preferment in the kingdom, which they still hoped he would set up on earth. The word *all*, is not here an unmeaning term. Some of the apostles had considerable possessions. James and John had hired servants (Mark 1: 20). Levi could make a great feast for Jesus in his own house (Luke 5: 29). But

28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his

γ De. 33: 9; ch. 4: 20; Lu. 5: 11.

whatever were their worldly means, they had left all for Christ. I cannot think with Olshausen, that Peter's question had no reference to a reward, but simply to the condition or state of mind they were in, that is, whether they had in reality done yet what was required of the young man. I cannot see from either context any ground for referring the question to aught else, than the reward which, in this stage of their discipleship, they were so over anxious about, and which was often made the subject of conversation when by themselves.

28. *Which have followed me as disciples.* *In the regeneration.* There has been much doubt as to the precise meaning of this word, in its present connection. Except in this place, it is only used in Tit. 3: 5, where it evidently applies to the new birth, or regeneration of the soul from a state of nature to one of grace and holiness. The connection here shows, that it must be taken in the more general sense of *renovation, restoration, time of reward*. But to construct it with the preceding words, in the sense of, "you who have followed me in the days of the first renewing influences of the gospel," does not seem to meet the full wants of the passage, and is besides unnecessary, as a designation of the time when the disciples followed him, a thing so well known. But if it be referred to the general restitution and renewal of all things at the day of judgment, and be constructed with the following words, "when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory" (25: 31), then it yields a full and consistent sense. I cannot agree with those interpreters, who expound the sitting upon his throne of glory, and the twelve apostles with him, as a figurative representation of his presence and power in the infant

glory, 'ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

z Ch. 20 : 21 ; Lu. 22 : 28, 29, 30 ; 1 Co. 6 : 2, 3 ; Re. 2 : 26.

church, laying down laws through his vicegerents the apostles, and sitting in judgment in their persons, upon all cases of discipline or doubtful doctrine. That was not the time of the reward of the apostles, but of their trials and persecutions. Nor does it furnish a pertinent reply to Peter's question. No suitable sense can be attached to the words, but that which has been already given, viz. the day of general and final judgment, when Christ shall sit upon his throne to restore all things to their former order and beauty, and to put all his enemies under his feet. That is the day of general renovation, the new birth of a moral creation, never to be marred or disordered by sin. On that day the apostles would be exalted in the sight of the assembled universe. As earthly kings and princes are surrounded, on great state occasions, by their ministers and high dignitaries, so the final Judge was to be attended by the apostles concurring in the judgment, which he would pronounce on the rebellious Jews and all others, who rejected the gospel preached by them, and those who should come after them. This sense of the words *in the regeneration*, is confirmed by the use of the word in profane writings. Cicero (Att. 6 : 6) calls his restoration to dignity and fortune, a *παλιγγενεσία*, a *regeneration*, a *new or second birth*. So Josephus styles the re-occupation of Judea after the exile. See Rob. Lex. *Throne of his glory*. See N. on 25 : 31. *Judging the twelve tribes, &c.* This is to be understood figuratively of concurrence in the sentence of the Judge. *Twelve tribes, &c.* The whole nation is referred to, the subdivision being made to comport with the number of the apostles.

29. *And every one, &c.* The promise of reward for devotion to Christ's cause is here made general. *Hath forsaken*

29 <sup>a</sup> And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or

<sup>a</sup> Ma. 10 : 29, 30 ; Lu. 18 : 29, 30.

by entering upon the service of Christ. *Houses or brethren, &c.* The enumeration embraces those things which men are most apt to value. In the family relations here noted, the order in which leave would be taken, is strikingly observed, unless, with our views of the conjugal relation, the words *wife* and *children* should be reversed. The trials here spoken of have had, in the history of the church, a frequent literal fulfillment. But this does not imply that faithful ministers of the gospel, whose duty it is to labor among their friends, or in the same region of country, and are thus exempt from the privations here spoken of, shall not be rewarded according to the spirit of self-denial and devotion, which they have manifested in their Master's service. *For my name's sake* (i. e. for the sake of Christ and his cause), constitutes the motive of these sacrifices, without which they are worthless. See N. on 5 : 10. In the parallel passage in Mark, it is *for my sake and the gospel's*, and in Luke *for the kingdom of heaven's sake*. The same great idea lies at the base of these varied forms of expression, viz. the identification of Christ with his cause, so that suffering and endurance in behalf of the gospel, is the same as if they were undergone for Christ's own person. *An hundredfold*, i. e. a hundred times as much in value as they had given up for Christ. The number is an indefinitely great one, and not to be taken as a literal assertion, that the reward would be just one hundred times greater than the value of the sacrifice. Mark and Luke confine this to the present life. As a literal reference to temporal blessings is out of the question, it must be figuratively referred to the spiritual peace, joy, and happiness, which are ever theirs whose hearts and lives are given to the service of Christ. There are doubtless instan-



wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

30 <sup>6</sup> But many *that are first*  
 7 Ch. 20: 16, & 21: 31, 32; Ma. 10: 31; Lu. 19: 30.

ces, however, in which sacrifices for Christ have been found productive of temporal blessings. But these are exceptions to the general experience of his followers, which is one of self-denial, privation, and suffering. See Rev. 7: 14. Mark subjoins, "with persecutions," which clearly shows that the blessings here referred to, are not temporal, but such as may be enjoyed amidst persecutions. *Shall inherit*, &c. Here reference is had to the final reward in heaven. This is the eternal life, from which the young ruler, through love of temporal riches, turned away with a sorrowful heart. How perfect and complete is this discourse of Christ, and how does it point to the service of God, as the only end and object of life, which will be rewarded hereafter.

30. *But many that are first*, i. e. who fill elevated stations in society, and possess wealth, and all earthly comforts and blessings. The type of this class was the young ruler. *Shall be last, and the last* (i. e. the low and humble, who have been faithful and self-denying in the service of Christ) *first*. In the eternal world, the condition of these two classes shall be reversed, like that of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16: 25). The expression here used was, doubtless, a proverbial one, but subject to slight verbal variations, as may be seen by comparing this with its repetition in 20: 16.

#### CHAP. XX.

1-16. PARABLE OF THE LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD. *Perea*.

1. *For the kingdom of heaven*, &c. This parable is designed to illustrate and enforce the sentiment, with which the preceding chapter closed. This will help us to the right understanding of its general scope, which is to show that the rewards of the Messianic dis-

shall be last, and the last *shall be* first.

#### CHAPTER XX.

FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is an*

pensation, are not of *debt*, but of *grace* (compare Rom. 4: 4, 5). Hence, neither the apostles nor any other followers of Christ, could claim anything from the fact that they had left all (19: 27), or been first in his service, or performed a greater amount of labor than others. In receiving their reward, they were as much the objects of the sovereign grace of God, as those called at a later period of life into the kingdom, or at a different age of the church, than in that of its first establishment after Christ's ascension. The great principle, "not of works but of grace," is taught in this parable, as applicable to all who enter God's service. Trench, after Bengel, well says, that in respect to the apostles and all true believers, "this parable is rather a warning against what might be, if they were not careful to watch against it, than a prophecy of what would be." The parable conveys a stern rebuke to those of a fault-finding, envious spirit, and who attach any thing of merit to their service in Christ's vineyard, or look for any other reward than that which is wholly of grace. The phrase, *kingdom of heaven*, means here the Christian dispensation begun on earth, and perfected in heaven. It may be paraphrased: The bestowment of rewards in the kingdom of Christ, and the mode in which God deals with those whom he calls into his service, may be illustrated by the manner in which a householder employed and paid off his laborers. This general scope of the parable, if kept in view, will render the interpretation of its parts comparatively easy and plain. *A householder, a head of a family*. See 10: 25; 13: 27. *Went out to the market-place* (see v. 3). *Early in the morning*; literally, *with the dawn*. From the subsequent designations, the third, sixth, ninth,

householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

3 And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place,

and eleventh hour, it is very evident, that the first laborers commenced their work at six o'clock in the morning, which was denominated the first hour of the day. *To hire laborers.* Here in the very outset, the reader is to be cautioned against pressing the similitude of the points of the parable too far. Men hire laborers, but God never hires his servants. The language of the parable conforms to human ways and usages. *Into his vineyard.* It is not material to know whether these laborers were employed to prune and dress the vineyard, or to gather the vintage. The former was probably their service, since the length of the day, and the heat spoken of in v. 13, would seem to forbid referring it to the vintage, which did not commence until the middle of September, and continued until the middle of November.

2. *And when he had agreed* (literally, *agreed in sound, was symphonious*). There was an express and mutual agreement between the householder and the first hired laborers, as to the amount of their wages, while it will be seen that those who entered upon their work at a later hour, left it to his sense of justice and generosity, what wages they were to receive. This renders the parable natural and apposite, but is not indicative, as Trench thinks, of a wrong spirit, from the very outset, in the laborers first hired. They did what was perfectly right in ascertaining what wages they were to have for their day's labor. Their fault consisted in what took place at the reckoning. *A penny.* The Roman denarius, a silver coin, varying from 15 to 17 cents. See N. on 18: 28. As this was the daily

4 And said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others

pay of a soldier, it was probably the usual wages of a laborer. The engagement on the part of the laborers for this sum was voluntary, and therefore no wrong was done them, in paying them only the stipulated wages.

3, 4. *The third hour,* i. e. nine o'clock. See N. on v. 1. The householder, finding that he could profitably employ more hands in his vineyard, went to the market place (see N. on 11: 16), the usual resort for idlers and unemployed men, to hire additional help. *Also,* as those first hired. *Whatsoever is right* (i. e. just and equitable), I will give you. This general assurance of fair dealing gave them to understand, that they should receive wages proportionate to the time in which they were employed. They were, doubtless, as much surprised at the issue, as were those who found fault with the householder for his apparent partiality and injustice. *Went their way* to the vineyard, to commence labor on the terms offered them. This shows that they were waiting for employment, and were not idlers.

5, 6. *Went out* to the market-place. He was yet in want of hands, and took the usual method to obtain a supply. *Sixth and ninth hour,* i. e. at noon, and at three o'clock in the afternoon. *And did likewise,* i. e. hired laborers on the same terms as before, agreeing to pay whatever was right. Thus an agreement was made with all the hands, and none could expect more than their proportionate wages. *About the eleventh hour.* Only one hour before the time for dismissing the laborers at night. It is not necessary to inquire, why the householder engaged more laborers at

standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

so late an hour. He doubtless had good reasons for it. In every man's experience, who cultivates an extensive farm, there are days in which he would be glad, at the very closing hour, to put more laborers into his field to finish up some particular work, which could not well be deferred to another day. Especially would this be likely to be true, in a large vineyard, suffering for the pruning-knife, and the necessary dressing of the vines. *He went out as before, to the market place. Why stand ye here all the day idle?* There is a slight tone of reproach in these words, as though the men addressed had been disposed to idle away their time. *Here* in the market place, where you doubtless might have found employment had you wished it.

7. *Hath hired us*, i. e. hath offered to employ us. They had not remained idle through indolence, or by demanding higher than ordinary wages, but because no man had required their services. They were industrious, and willing to work, whenever the opportunity was offered them. They had tarried in the market to an unusually late hour, in hopes that even then, some one would employ them, and pay them the proportionate wages of the day. It is necessary to take all these circumstances into account, in reaching the full meaning of this parable, in its spiritual application. But no one must suppose from this, that the tardiness to accept the invitations of the gospel, which with some persons extends even to the eleventh hour, is excusable, or of safe precedent.

8. *When even was come*, the time for closing the labors of the day, which was at 6 o'clock. This with the indivi-

8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

9 And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh

dual believer, is at the hour of death, but in reference to bringing the labors of the whole church to a close, it denotes the time of final reckoning, the day of judgment. *The lord*, i. e. the owner, possessor. *Steward*, i. e. agent or manager. Olshausen says, that the steward symbolizes Christ and the laborers refer to "the pastors and bishops of the church of God," the souls of men being the vineyard where their labors are to be expended. But let fancy once begin to make all these minor points symbolical, and there will be no stopping place, until the most trifling minutiae are forced to teach some great truth or lesson, and the principal design of the parable is lost sight of altogether. *Call the laborers* to receive their pay. *Beginning from the last* (and paying them in order) *unto the first*. This order of payment was necessary to give opportunity for the complaint which was about to be made, for had the laborers who worked all day been paid first, they would have retired, and not been witnesses of the amount paid to those who came last. The last was also first (see 19 : 30), in the honor of being paid first.

9. *That were hired*. The words *were hired* is supplied. Alford supplies, *were sent into the vineyard*. The sense is the same. *They received every man* (literally, *each*) *his penny*, i. e. a full day's wages, although having worked only one hour. It is needless to inquire why the householder did this. He had his reasons. Some attribute it to their superior industry and activity, compared with those first hired. But, as Trench remarks, such an assumption blunts the point of the parable. From the householder's remark, *because I am*

hour, they received every man a penny.

10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

11 And when they had received

*good* (v. 15), we may gather, that he had compassion on these laborers, who through no fault of their own (see N. on v. 7), were out of employment, and therefore gave them full pay. The fact, however, is all with which we have to do, in the interpretation and application of the parable. No inference should be drawn from this point of the parable, that there are no degrees of future glory among the blessed, a truth taught abundantly in other portions of God's word (see 25 : 14-30; Luke 19 : 12-19; 1 Cor. 15 : 41).

10. *They supposed*, &c. It was true that they had worked for stipulated wages, but when they saw the same amount given to those, who had entered the field at a late hour, their hopes were raised for an increase of pay. *More* than was paid to those who began their work at a later hour. *They likewise*, as in the payment of the others.

11. *When they had received it*. They could not refuse it, because it was all which they bargained to receive. *They murmured*. The sound of this word in the original is expressive of the sense, *to mutter* or *murmur in low tones*, as when one is displeased or discontented. Instead of retiring to their homes, they lingered about the house of their employer, conversing in low, sullen, and grumbling tones, of the wrong which they fancied had been done them. *Against the goodman*, &c. They did not discuss the justice or policy of this strange process of payment, as an abstract question, but found fault directly with the householder, and charged him with having done them a great wrong. *Goodman*. The same word translated *householder* in v. 1. The word *good* has here no

*it*, they murmured against the goodman of the house,

12 Saying, these last have wrought *but* one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

13 But he answered one of

moral signification, but is used in what is now an obsolete sense, as an appellation of civility and respect.

12. *Saying*. They became so heated with indignation at this apparent injustice, that they boldly expostulated with the householder, and charged him with wrong doing. *These last have wrought*, &c. They were particularly displeased that full pay had been given to those, who entered the vineyard at so late an hour. *Equal* in the wages given them. *Who have borne*, &c. i. e. who have toiled the whole day, and upon whom the brunt of the labor and noon-tide heat has fallen, whereas these have done but little, and that too, in the coolness of the closing day. The word translated *heat*, literally signifies a *burning*, *scorching heat*, and is sometimes put for the scorching wind, called the *Sirocco*. This exaggeration was well suited to the excitement of the servants. The arrangement of the words in the original, *who have borne the burden of the day and the heat*, would seem to favor the idea, that the heat was not something of daily occurrence, like the solar heat, but a visitation of unusual heat like that produced by the *Sirocco*. This portion of the parable must not be pressed to teach, that among true believers there will be any murmuring or dissatisfaction, at the final award of the judgment. The circumstance is introduced to give occasion for the reply of the householder, that having fulfilled the terms on which the murmurers engaged in his service, he had a right to reward the other laborers, as seemed good to him.

13. *But he answered one of them*, who had acted as spokesman for the others, or who had become more excited than



them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

14 Take *that* thine *is*, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

*a* Ro. 9: 21. *b* De. 15: 9; Pr. 23: 6; ch. 6: 23.

the rest. *Friend.* So we say, even to inferiors or strangers, *my good friend*, as an expression of common civility. Such is its use also in 22: 12; 24: 50. *I do thee no wrong.* He had no ground of complaint. He had received the wages agreed upon at the outset. It was no business of his, what the householder paid to the other laborers. Had injustice been done to any of them, he might have made common cause with the injured, and endeavored to redress their wrongs. But all had received their full stipulated pay. There was no ground of complaint, except that he had been kind and generous, beyond what could have been expected, to the eleventh-hour laborers. Their murmurings therefore arose from nothing else than envy and selfishness. *Didst not thou, &c.* A rhetorical question, serving to affirm strongly the truth of the inquiry. The word rendered *agree*, is the strong term employed in 18: 19, showing entire agreement.

14. *Take that thine is* (literally, *take the thine*) and go thy way. Be satisfied with your wages and depart to your home. There is a sternness in these words expressive of displeasure, at this interference with the just rights of the householder. *I will give.* It is my pleasure to give, I choose to give. *Unto this last.* The singular is here used collectively for the plural, unless, perhaps, he pointed to some particular one of those who came last, as a representative of the whole class, but singled out in contrast with the discontented one whom he was addressing.

15. *Is it not lawful, &c.* Have I not a moral and legal right? *With mine own*; literally, *with the mine*, i. e. in my own affairs, in business pertaining to myself. *Is thine eye evil?* Figu-

15 <sup>a</sup> Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? <sup>b</sup> is thine eye evil, because I am good?

16 <sup>c</sup> So the last shall be first, and the first last: <sup>d</sup> for many be

*c* Ch. 19: 30. *d* Ch. 22: 14.

ratively and proverbially put for, *art thou envious?* The eye is here put for the person, because the *sight* of the prosperity of others is the usual incitement to envy. Some, however, think that reference is had to the indication, which the eye gives of the envious feeling within. But this is less natural. *Because I am good*, i. e. because I have shown kindness to these poor men, who stood waiting for employment almost the whole day, and found none.

16. *So the last, &c.* This is the point illustrated by the parable, and connects it with the last verse of the preceding chapter. The laborers who had come last were reckoned with the first, had received greater proportionate wages, and had not marred, as Alford well remarks, their reward by a murmuring spirit. Thus, in the kingdom of heaven, there will be a revival and rectification of things, and rewards and honors will be bestowed upon those who were the last in the estimation of men, while the rich and noble of earth, unless the objects of renewing grace, will be excluded from God's presence. Neander finds such difficulty in harmonizing these words with the teaching of the parable, that all are to be on the same footing, that he would wholly disjoin them from the parable, as having been by accident brought into this connection. But the parable does not teach absolute equality, for the course of the householder seemed so partial, that some of the laborers were bitterly displeased. Nor does he justify himself in his reply, on the ground that all were treated precisely alike, but that being just to the murmurers, he had the most perfect right to be generous and liberal to the others. *For many are called, &c.* Some commentators refer this

called, but few chosen.

17 ¶ And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them,

18 √ Behold, we go up to Jeru-

e Ma. 10 : 32 ; Lu. 18 : 31 ; Jn. 12 : 12.

f Ch. 16 : 21.

verse, which belongs to the whole subject as a general inference, to the universality and extent of the gospel invitation, and the comparatively few who embrace it. Many are invited to partake of its blessings, but few really accept the invitation by repentance and faith in Christ. Other expositors thus explain it: Many are called and professedly become members of the Christian church, but few approve themselves worthy of the blessing, and show that they have not received the grace of God in vain. These views are both true, but do not seem to be taught in this passage. It is clear from the whole scope of the discourse, beginning at Peter's question (19 : 27), and from the parable by which it is illustrated, that the nature and variety of rewards in the kingdom of grace, is the only and prevailing theme. The passage before us is the summing or closing up of this subject, and must, therefore, be interpreted in accordance with it. The general sentiment is this: Many are called into the kingdom of Christ, and enjoy its rewards, but few are chosen to those high positions of trust and usefulness, to which are attached the higher rewards of heaven, or to such a spirit of love for the service of Christ, as to be wholly free from the narrow prejudices of those, who draw their motives of obedience principally from the rewards annexed thereto. This sense comports with the context, and is the only one which can be legitimately drawn from the passage. There is in the Greek words translated *called* and *chosen*, a sort of paronomasia (see N. on 5 : 19), "Many are *kletoi* but few are *eklektoi*." This play on words is often found in proverbial expressions, old sayings, and the like.

17-19. JESUS THE THIRD TIME FORE-

salet; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death,

19 √ And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to

g Ch. 27 : 2 ; Ma. 15 : 1, 16, &c. ; Lu. 23 : 1 ;

Jn. 18 : 28, &c. ; Ac. 3 : 13.

TELS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION. *Perea.* Mark 10 : 32-34 : Luke 18 : 31-34.

17. *Going up*, i. e. while on his journey to Jerusalem. The chief city of any Oriental country was always spoken of, as though it was elevated above the surrounding region. This was geographically true of Jerusalem. As our Lord had not yet reached Jericho, he was still in Perea when the following discourse took place. Mark (10 : 32) adds a very interesting circumstance, that Jesus went before them, and that they were amazed as they followed him, and were afraid. There was an ardor and holy enthusiasm in his manner, which impressed them with awe and astonishment, and they were fearful of its consequences, both upon their Master and themselves. It appeared to them, that in thus boldly venturing into the midst of his enemies, he had thrown away all prudence and regard for his life. While they were in this state of agitation and alarm, he *took the twelve disciples apart in the way*, in a convenient place of retirement, where they could rest a few moments without interruption, and addressed them on the very subject which lay uppermost in their thoughts.

18. *Behold, we go up*, &c. He now plainly informs them of the place to which he was going, and of the sufferings and dreadful death which awaited him there. He had spoken of this before (see 16 : 21 ; 17 : 22, 23), but not in such plain and direct terms as now. *Shall be betrayed.* See N. on 17 : 22. *Unto the chief priests.* See N. on 16 : 21. *Shall condemn*, i. e. shall cause to be condemned, inasmuch as the Sanhedrim had no power to inflict capital punishment.

19. *Shall deliver him to the Gentiles*, i. e. to Pilate and the Roman soldiers.

scourge, and to crucify *him*: and the third day he shall rise again.

20 ¶ <sup>h</sup> Then came to him the mother of <sup>i</sup> Zebedee's children

<sup>h</sup> Ma. 10 : 35.

*To mock*, i. e. for them to mock him. This denotes both the purpose and result of their delivering him up. *To scourge*, after the Roman manner, as preliminary to the being nailed to the cross. See N. on 27 : 26. *To crucify*; literally, *to nail to the cross*. This was a Roman and not a Jewish punishment. It will be more particularly explained in note on 27 : 35. As Christ suffered for the sins of the world (1 John 2 : 2), it was divinely appointed, that both Jews and Gentiles should be involved in the dreadful guilt of his death. The Jews accused him and clamorously demanded his death; the Roman soldiers, by their mode of punishment, effected it. It is to be noted with what particularity and accuracy, Jesus foretold the manner of his own death. To mere human forethought, he was much more likely to fall a victim to some sudden outburst of Jewish rage, and be stoned to death, as was Stephen, or thrown down some precipice, as the people of Nazareth once attempted to do to him (Luke 4 : 29). Both Mark and Luke add the vile indignity, that he was to be spitted upon, which was also verified in the event. *The third day*. See N. on 16 : 21. The assertion of Luke (18 : 34), that the disciples understood none of these things, although so plainly and openly declared, appears strange and unaccountable, unless it be borne in mind, how deeply rooted were their prejudices in favor of a temporal Messianic kingdom, under which delusion they could not see how their Master should be given up to his enemies, to suffer an ignominious death. They were not fully enlightened on this point, until the Holy Ghost came upon them after our Lord's ascension.

20-28. THE AMBITIOUS REQUEST OF JAMES AND JOHN. *Perea*. Mark 10 : 35-45.

20. *Then came to him the mother, &c.*

with her sons, worshipping *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him.

21 And he said unto her, What

<sup>i</sup> Ch. 4 : 21.

In Mark the two disciples are said themselves to have preferred the request. On this apparent discrepancy, see N. on 8 : 5. It is generally supposed that the mother of James and John, was the Salome mentioned in Mark 15 : 40; 16 : 1. She seems to have accompanied our Lord from Galilee, and although a good woman, yet labored under the common mistake as to the nature of his kingdom, and ambitiously desired for her sons the high honor here referred to. *With her sons*. They joined in the request, and indeed, as it appears from a comparison with Mark, had incited her to make it on their behalf. It is remarkable, that in both instances in which our Lord foretold his sufferings and death, there followed almost immediately such unworthy desires for pre-eminence on the part of the apostles. See 17 : 22, 23; Mark 9 : 31, 32; Luke 9 : 44, 45, compared with Mark 9 : 33, 34; Luke 9 : 46. Once more at the passover meal, just before his passion (Luke 22 : 24), "there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest." How early did this desire for precedence take possession of the followers of Christ, and how baneful have been its effects, whenever, in subsequent times, it has crept into the church. *Worshipping*. Respectfully saluting him according to oriental custom. *A certain thing*. She hoped he would grant her request, as a mark of his love and confidence, before she had fully made it known. Mark relates more fully that John and James (probably through their mother) asked, that he should do for them whatsoever they should desire.

21. *What wilt thou?* Jesus would make no rash promise, as did Herod (14 : 7), and therefore requested her to speak out plainly the nature of her request. *The one on thy right hand, &c.* In Oriental courts, to sit upon the right

wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons<sup>k</sup> may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of<sup>l</sup> the cup

<sup>k</sup> Ch. 19: 28. <sup>l</sup> Ch. 26: 39, 42; Ma. 14: 36;  
<sup>l</sup> Lu. 22: 42; Jn. 18: 11.

and left hand of the monarch, was an honor conferred upon those only, who had been raised to the highest dignity. See 1 Kings 2: 19; Ps. 45: 9; 110: 1. Dr. Jahn thinks, that reference is had to the Sanhedrim, over which presided the high priest, on the right and left of whom sat the two next in authority, as in modern assemblies the president is supported by the vice-presidents. James and John probably deemed themselves special favorites, having been admitted to peculiar privileges, and they were emboldened thereby, to ask the highest posts of honor in the kingdom he was about to establish. With what shame must they, in after times, have looked back upon this spirit of worldly ambition, which then possessed them. Especially unenviable must have been John's reflections upon this request, when, at the crucifixion, he saw his Lord hang upon the cross, with the two thieves on his right and on his left.

22. *Ye know not, &c.* They intended their request to embrace the highest worldly honor and happiness, but it was virtually asking to drink of that dreadful cup of suffering, which even the Savior prayed might pass from him. The idea is more fully developed in the question, *are ye able to drink of the cup, &c.* Have you the courage, firmness, and constancy to share with me in my trials and sufferings? This you should settle in your mind, before you ask for a position of such honor in my Kingdom. The *cup*, in ancient times, was the emblem of prosperity, or suffering; because from it were drunk beverages of varied mixture and quality. Its use, to denote sorrow and suffering, is

that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with<sup>m</sup> the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.

23 And he saith unto them, <sup>n</sup>Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but,

<sup>m</sup> Lu. 12: 50. <sup>n</sup> Ac. 12: 2; Ro. 8: 17;  
 2 Co. 1: 7; Re. 1: 9.

more common than the opposite. Compare Ps. 16: 5; 23: 5; 60: 3; 75: 8; Isa. 51: 17, 22; Lam. 4: 21. The form of the question, "are ye able to drink of the cup?" could have left no doubt on the minds of the disciples, that it denoted a cup of suffering. *To be baptized, &c.* i. e. to be overwhelmed with the sufferings, which are to come upon me. The imagery is varied, but the idea is the same as that of the preceding clause. *We are able.* This reply evinces a spirit of presumption and self-confidence, which might have been expected as an accompaniment of such ambitious views. We cannot, however, question the sincerity of their professions, as they were his most devoted followers, though far from possessing the spirit of humility and self-distrust, to which they afterwards attained.

23. *Ye shall indeed drink, &c.* This was verified in the subsequent history. James was slain with the sword (Acts 12: 2); and John, although he died a natural death at an advanced age, suffered stripes and banishment, and was a companion with the persecuted disciples in tribulation (see Acts 4: 3; 5: 40; Rev. 1: 9). It was a tradition also that he was plunged into a caldron of burning oil, but so far from being injured was refreshed thereby. *But to sit on my right hand, &c.* Our Lord does not imply by this, that such a position of honor will find an exact reality in the heavenly world, but using the same form of expression in which the ambitious request of James and John had been preferred, he denotes thereby those high seats of glory and bliss



to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father.

24 <sup>r</sup> And when the ten heard

o Ch. 25 : 34.

which, undoubtedly, will be occupied by the holy and self-denying saints, for whom, in divine mercy and wisdom, they have been reserved. *Is not mine to give* to any one, on the ground of private friendship. Our Lord does not assert that he had no power to raise his followers to honor, but that he could do this only to such as had been appointed to exaltation by his Father, and whose lives rendered them worthy of it. The word *but*, in the next clause, may be rendered *except* (a meaning which the original word often has), and the words omitted, which are italicized in our English translation, and which are not found in the original. The passage would then read: *is not mine* (i. e. is not my office, or in my power) *to give, except to those for whom it is prepared* (literally, *has been made ready*) *of my Father*. The inferiority of Christ to the Father, which appears here as in many other places, is not an essential, but an official one. As Mediator, God-man, the Messiah, he always appears in subordination to the Father, and this, rightly understood, is not inconsistent with those great texts, in which his divinity and coequal power with the Father are fully taught. See N. on 11 : 27.

24. *When the ten heard it*. Their conversation was doubtless overheard by some, who reported it to the others. *Were filled with indignation* at what they conceived to be an underhand effort, to rob them of the honors to which they also aspired. In this they showed their own ambitious spirit, nearly as much as did the two offending brethren. They were not grieved at the desire for pre-eminence of James and John, as would have been proper, but *highly irritated* and *vexed*, as the word more literally signifies. Perhaps they had heard only a portion of the

*it*, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

25 But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise

p Ma. 10 : 41 ; Lu. 22 : 24, 25.

conversation, and were yet ignorant of the reply made by Jesus to the two disciples.

25. *But Jesus called them, &c.* Our Lord had just informed his disciples that he was going up to Jerusalem, to suffer a cruel and ignominious death. It might have been supposed, that this sad object of their journey would have been uppermost in the apostles' minds, and left no room for anger, jealousy, and heart-burnings against one another. But it was far otherwise. He saw his disciples agitated with mutual distrust, envy, and jealousy. This state of things must not be suffered to continue, and he calls them around him, to admonish them of their error, and inspire them with better feelings. *Princes of the Gentiles*, i. e. Gentile rulers. *Exercise dominion over them*. The original word is very intensive; *lord it over, exercise lordly power* over their subjects. *And they that are great, &c.* This clause is parallel in sense with the former. By *the great ones* are meant both civil and military rulers, nobles, princes. *Exercise authority*. The despotic power of heathen rulers is well known to every student of ancient history. There was a constant struggle, who should attain to the highest authority, and thus avoid the galling yoke of subordinate stations. Our Savior refers here to the oppression and tyranny practised by the superior in station over their inferiors, rather than to the general oppression of the common people. This renders the illustration apposite to the disciples, who were beginning to be influenced by the same spirit of domination over one another. The apostles were to be placed over the infant church. They were to organize and give it rules of discipline and doctrine. But they were not to strive for pre-eminence, and lord

dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

26 But <sup>q</sup> it shall not be so among you: but <sup>r</sup> whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

*q* 1 Pe. 5: 3. *r* Ch. 23: 11; Ma. 9: 35, & 10: 43.  
*s* Ch. 15: 4. *t* John 13: 4. *u* Phi. 2: 7.  
*w* Lu. 22: 27; Jn. 13: 14.

it over one another, as did the heathen rulers. They were all to be of equal authority, and regard one another as brethren. Thus they would be examples of humility to the flock of Christ, of which they were to be overseers.

26, 27. *But it shall not be so, &c.* Such principles are not to govern you. *But whosoever will be great, &c.* Your greatness is to consist in humility, lowliness, and condescension in ministering unto others. You are to render yourselves worthy of my regard, by the exercise of a humble, self-denying, self-sacrificing spirit. The word *great* is here opposed to *the great ones* in v. 25, and represents true greatness, not founded on worldly rank or authority, but on principles of goodness and active benevolence. *Minister*, servant, attendant. *Chief*; literally, *first* in dignity and power. This is an increase on the word *great*, in the preceding clause, and, in like manner, *servant*, a *slave*, denotes a more lowly condition than is implied in the word *minister*, or *deacon*, as it literally signifies. The higher the position to which any one would aspire in Christ's service, the lower must be the depths of humility, self-abasement, and readiness to serve others, to which he must descend.

28. *Even as the Son of man, &c.* This law of Christ's kingdom is enforced by his own example. From the very height of glory and power (John 1: 1) he descended, and took upon himself the form of a servant (Phil. 2: 7), that he might save those who were lost. *To be ministered unto*, i. e. to be served as the great men of the earth are by

27 <sup>a</sup> And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

28 <sup>t</sup> Even as the <sup>u</sup> Son of man came not to be ministered unto, <sup>v</sup> but to minister, and <sup>w</sup> to give his life a ransom <sup>x</sup> for many.

*y* Is. 53: 10, 11; Da. 9: 24, 26; Jn. 11: 51, 52; 1 Ti. 2: 6; Tit. 2: 14; 1 Pe. 1: 19. *z* Ch. 26: 28; Ro. 5: 15, 19; He. 9: 28.

their inferiors. *To give his life* by a voluntary surrender of it to death. *A ransom*; literally, *loosing-money*, a sum paid to release any one from death, captivity, bondage, or any sort of punishment. It is sometimes used to denote a *piacular victim*, as Bloomfield has abundantly shown by references. Here it evidently has an expiatory sense, as it stands in explanatory apposition with the preceding words, *to give his life*, denoting its character or purpose. The argument is this: Men are exposed by sin to eternal death. They are under the condemnation of the law. Christ gave his life, as their substitute, to redeem them from this state of legal condemnation, and to place them in a condition, in which, by repentance and faith in Him, they may be saved. In this sense he was their *ransom*. *For many*, i. e. a multitude, all. The term is here general, not denoting many of a fixed, definite number, as opposed to the whole of that number, but *many*, in the sense of a great multitude contrasted with the *single life* of Christ, which was of value sufficiently high to be accepted of God, as a ransom for all the rest, who had fallen into legal condemnation. See Rom. 5: 15, 19, where this same kind of antithesis is found between the *one* who sinned, and *the many* (i. e. all his posterity) who are involved in the consequences of his sin. The presence of the article in these instances, does not at all affect the sense, for it is employed by way of reference or renewed mention, the idea being previously brought to view in v. 12, where the antithesis or contrast between *one* man, as the occasion of the

29 ¶ <sup>a</sup> And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.

30 And behold, <sup>b</sup> two blind men sitting by the way-side, when

<sup>a</sup> Ma. 10 : 46; Lu. 18 : 35.

entrance of sin into the world, and *all men* (i. e. his posterity), upon whom death has passed in consequence of that sin, is first laid down. In Heb. 9 : 28, the same contrast between *one* (Christ who offered himself) and *many* (the rest, all whose sins were borne), is observed. See also 26 : 28; Mark 14 : 24, where the same phraseology is made use of. It seems clear, therefore, that the word *many* in this passage, includes *all* mankind, in contrast with the single person, Christ Jesus, who came to save them from sin and death.

29-34. THE HEALING OF TWO BLIND MEN NEAR JERICHO. Mark 10 : 46-52; Luke 18 : 35-43; 19 : 1.

29. *And as they departed*, &c. See Mark (10 : 46), "as he went out of Jericho." But in Luke (19 : 1), we find that it was when "he was come nigh to Jericho" (i. e. was just entering it), that the miracle here spoken of was performed. The apparent discrepancy is removed, if we read in Luke, "while he was (yet) nigh unto Jericho," a sense which the original will bear, and which does no violence to the laws of interpretation. This is better than with Trench, after Bengel, to suppose that one of these beggars cried to him as he drew near the city, but that he did not cure him then, but did this on the next day as he was leaving the city, another blind beggar having in the mean while joined himself to the first one. Olshausen thinks that there is a real and irreconcilable disagreement between the Evangelists, both in respect to the place and time of the miracle, and the fact that Mark and Luke, contrary to the statement of Matthew, mention only a single individual as cured (but see N. on v. 30). He regards, however, a difference on so immaterial a point, as showing the genuine historical character of the gospels,

they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* son of David.

31 And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold

<sup>b</sup> Ch. 9 : 27.

and placing the writers above suspicion. Jericho was situated about five miles from the Jordan, and twenty miles N. E. of Jerusalem. It was destroyed by Joshua, and rebuilt about 520 years afterwards (see 1 Kings 16 : 34). The region around Jericho abounded in palm trees, and hence it is styled (Judges 3 : 13), *the city of palm trees*. In the time of Elijah and Elisha, it was the seat of a school of the prophets. Herod the Great built here a castle, in which he died. In the time of Christ it must have been a flourishing city. Dr. Robinson says that its site is still occupied by a miserable village, called Riha, and only a single palm tree now remains to this *city of palms*. *A great multitude*, &c. As Jesus journeyed from Perea to Jericho, attended only by his disciples and a few pious women (Mark 15 : 41), this great multitude must have been gathered from Jericho and the surrounding region.

30. *Two blind men*. Mark and Luke speak of only one, referring probably to Bartimeus, who was well known. The apparent discrepancy, which Olshausen fancies an irreconcilable disagreement (see N. on v. 29), is much like that of the demoniacs of Gadara (8 : 28, on which see Note). *Sitting by the way side*, in order to obtain alms of the passers by. *When they heard*, &c. Luke says that, hearing the noise of the multitude, the blind men asked what it meant, and were told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. Having already heard of him as a great prophet performing wondrous cures, they at once began to cry out, *Have mercy on us*, &c. Like the blind men spoken of in 9 : 27 (on which see N.), they had faith to acknowledge Him whom they had not seen, as the long expected Messiah.

31, 32. *And the multitude rebuked*

their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* son of David.

32 And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you?

33 They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.

34 So Jesus had compassion *on*

*a* Ma. 11: 1; Lu. 19: 29.

*them.* They were probably unwilling that Jesus should be interrupted by persons of so little consequence, as two blind beggars. But Jesus did not feel thus. His ear caught their repeated cry, and *he stood still and called them*, or as Mark has it, commanded them to be called. See Mark 10: 49, from which it also appears that the one named Bartimeus was in such haste to come into the presence of Jesus, that he threw away his outer garment, in order not to be encumbered by it. *What will ye, &c.* They were required to make known their request, in order that their faith in his ability and readiness to heal them, might be the more manifest.

33. *That our eyes.* The words *we desire*, are to be supplied. *May be opened.* The corresponding word in Mark and Luke literally signifies *to again see*, from which it would appear, that Bartimeus at least was not born blind, but had lost his sight from some casualty. It may, however, be taken in the general sense, *to recover sight*, as in John 9: 11, 15, where it is employed of one who was blind from his birth.

34. *Had compassion.* The same strong expression of pity made use of in 9: 36, on which see Note. *Touched their eyes.* See N. on 8: 3. Mark and Luke add, "thy faith hath made thee whole." So Jesus said to the centurion (8: 13), "as thou hast believed so be it done unto thee;" and to the Syro-Phœnician woman (15: 28), "great is thy faith, be it unto thee, even as thou wilt." It was not the faith of the blind men which caused them to see. That was effected by divine power. But faith

*them*, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

#### CHAPTER XXI.

AND <sup>a</sup>when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto <sup>b</sup>the

*b* Zec. 14: 4.

was a prerequisite to their proper application for help, and thus in a secondary sense, might be said to have made them whole. *Received sight or saw again*, if ever before they had enjoyed sight. *They followed him* with the crowd on his way to Jerusalem.

This miracle of healing the blind men has often been employed to illustrate the spiritual blindness of men, the earnestness with which they must apply to Christ (who, by his Spirit, is always passing by) for his healing mercies, and the readiness of the Savior, on any such application made in penitence and faith, to put forth his healing power. Thousands have read this simple and touching story, as a truthful history of their own sad spiritual blindness, and its removal through the abounding grace of Jesus Christ. Thousands have sung, and we believe will sing to the end of time, the beautiful hymn—

"Mercy, O thou Son of David,"

as the genuine expression of their own feelings, in view of the wondrous change wrought in them, by the same Almighty Savior.

#### CHAP. XXI.

1-17. OUR LORD'S PUBLIC ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM. THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE. *Bethany, Jerusalem.* Second Day of the Week. Mark 11: 1-11; Luke 19: 29-44. The thread of the narrative requires that we should read in Luke 19: 2-28, the visit of our Lord to Zaccheus (which must have taken place before the healing of the blind man, while our Lord was yet in



mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,

2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose

*them*, and bring *them* unto me.

3 And if any *man* say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them: and straightway he will send them.

4 All this was done, that it

Jericho), and the parable of the Ten Pounds, spoken while there to rectify the views of the people, as to the nature of his kingdom, and their guilt in rejecting him. After he had finished the parable, he resumed his journey to Jerusalem, but not having time to reach the city, at a seasonable hour on that day, he stopped at Bethany, where it is evident from John 12 : 12, he tarried over night. The next day he proceeded on his way, and was met by much people, who having heard of his approach to the city, went forth to meet him, and thus swelled the numbers of the multitude who accompanied him from Jericho and Bethany.

1. *And when they drew nigh, &c.* Bethphage (i. e. *house of figs*) was a small village E. of the Mount of Olives, and a short distance from Bethany, on the way to Jerusalem. Mark and Luke mention the two places, Bethphage and Bethany, but as Jesus had spent the preceding night at Bethany, reference is had, doubtless, to the outward boundary of the place, which probably extended as far as Bethphage. It was on the confines of these two places, where our Lord sent forth his two disciples. *Mount of Olives.* This mount, so celebrated in the last six days of our Lord's history, lay E. of Jerusalem, from which it was separated by the valley of Kidron. Its elevation is 2,556 Paris feet above the sea, and 416 Paris feet above the valley of the Kidron. See Rob. Lex. N. T. It received its name from the abundance of olive trees with which it was covered, a few of which kind of trees are still upon it. On the eastern side of this mountain were the above mentioned villages. *Two disciples.* Probably Peter and John.

2. *Village over against you.* This must have been Bethphage, unless we

absurdly suppose that our Lord sent his disciples back to Bethany, where he had spent the preceding night (see N. on v. 1). *Tied* to prevent her straying away. *A colt.* Mark and Luke add, "whereon never man sat," and also speak only of the colt as being brought. As they do not deny that the ass also was brought, there is no discrepancy. Nothing is more common than for independent writers to add or omit such incidents, as are not essential to the integrity of the narration. In ancient times, princes and great men rode upon asses, and animals that had never borne the yoke or been ridden, were employed for sacred uses. See Deut. 21 : 3 ; 1 Sam. 6 : 7. *Loose them.* The word *them* is here supplied, but that both animals were included, is evident from v. 3, "the Lord hath need of them."

3. *Say aught*, i. e. make any objection to the loosing of the animals. *The Lord*, i. e. Master, Teacher, the same as Rabbi. I cannot agree with Alford, that it here signifies the Lord, Jehovah, not for the reason given by Steir, that it offends against decorum, for that objection would apply as strongly to *Lord, Messiah*, but because our Savior evidently meant to be understood, as referring to himself in his character as public teacher, by which he was generally known and addressed. *Hath need of them*, i. e. wishes to use them. *He will send them*, i. e. will permit them to be led away. The owner was probably a friend of our Lord, or was at least well acquainted with his claims to public consideration.

4. The quotation in this verse more properly comes in after v. 7, and thus it is arranged by the best harmonists. *All this was done, &c.* See N. on 1 : 22. The quotation is almost an exact one from Zech. 9 : 9, a short clause in the original prophecy, not essential to

might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

5 <sup>c</sup> Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

<sup>c</sup> Is. 62: 11; Zec. 9: 9; John 12: 15.

the purpose of the quotation, being only omitted.

5. *Tell ye the daughter of Zion*, is not found in Zechariah, but seems to have been taken from Isa. 62: 11. The expression, *daughter of Zion*, is a poetical personification for *Jerusalem*. Sion or Zion was the southernmost and highest of the hills on which the city was built, and is, therefore, often put for the whole city. See Ps. 137: 1. *Behold thy king*. The Jews always regarded this as referring to the Messiah. *Unto thee*, i. e. unto the city. *Meek*, gentle, peaceful, unlike an earthly potentate or conqueror, with proud and haughty demeanor. *Sitting upon an ass, and a colt*, &c. Although our Lord rode only the colt, yet as the ass had been also prepared for him, and was in his train, the terms of the prophecy were sufficiently fulfilled. Some expositors, losing sight of this fulfilment of the prophecy, in the preparation of both animals for use, translate the latter clause, *even a colt*, as explanatory of the former. But this is inadmissible, as the two animals have just been so distinctly referred to. *Of an ass*; literally, *a beast of burden*, but used of the ass.

6. *Did as Jesus had commanded*. It appears from Mark and Luke, that the incidents connected with the loosing of the ass, were all as Jesus had said.

7. *Put on them*. They put their clothes upon both animals for the greater honor, or through uncertainty which he intended to ride. *Their clothes*, i. e. their outer garments, which were often laid aside. See Acts 7: 58; 22: 20; John 13: 4, 12. These were placed upon the animals, as a mark of honor to Jesus. Compare 2 Kings 9: 13. "In this act of the peo-

6 <sup>d</sup> And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them,

7 And brought the ass and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set *him* thereon.

8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way;

<sup>d</sup> Ma. 11: 4.    <sup>e</sup> 2 Ki. 9: 13.

ple, they plainly expressed their acknowledgment of Jesus as their Messianic king." Olshausen. *They set him*. Mark: *he sat*. There is no essential difference. They, doubtless, assisted him to mount the animal. *Thereon*, i. e. on the garments. The word in the original could refer equally well to the ass and foal, and is thus referred by some commentators. Whether referring to the clothes placed on both animals, or to the animals themselves, inasmuch as Jesus rode but one, we must regard the plural put for the singular, by way of grammatical correspondence with the plural in the preceding clause. This entry of our Lord into Jerusalem, in the way predicted of the Messiah, was intended by him as a public and open avowal of his Messiahship.

8. *A very great multitude*. The numbers that attended him from Jericho had been swelled by those who came forth to meet him from Jerusalem. *Spread their garments in the way*. It was the custom, when kings and victorious generals were making their triumphal entrance into the chief city, to strew the way with flowers and branches of trees, and spread it with carpets, except the narrow central portion, over which the procession would pass. The outer garments were here substituted for carpets, as a spontaneous expression of their respect, the watchful jealousy of the rulers preventing all preparations beforehand to honor Jesus. *Branches from the trees*. John says they were branches from the palm trees. The palm, of which such frequent mention is made in ancient and oriental writings, is the pride of tropical climes, and far surpasses in grandeur all other trees of the forest. The trunk springs

others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed *them* in the way.

9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried,

*f* See Le. 23: 40; Jn. 12: 13. *g* Ps. 113: 25.

up straight, unbranching, tapering, until towering far above the surrounding trees, it is crowned by a large tuft of radiating leaves, which gives it a singularly grand and unique appearance. But aside from its majesty, it is superior to almost every other plant in useful properties. It furnishes to the inhabitants of the region where it grows, bread, wine, vinegar, sugar, fruit, and materials for all kinds of wicker-work, &c. Strabo says, that there was a Persian song, in which three hundred and sixty-five advantages of the palm tree were enumerated. Of almost equal use is it now to the aborigines of Brazil, and other tropical climes. *And strewed them in the way.* Some of the multitude had no supernumerary garments to cast in the way. These resorted to the trees in the vicinity, and cutting off branches, and casting them down before Jesus, were thus enabled to share in the demonstrations of respect and joy.

9. *The multitudes that went before.*

Our Lord was in the centre of the procession, attended by his disciples and more intimate friends. *Hosanna.* A word of Hebrew origin signifying, *save now, be propitious now*, and used as a term of supplication, and afterwards of joyous acclamation, especially in the feast of Tabernacles. See Ps. 118: 25, 26. *To the Son of David*, i. e. the Messiah, as the term was well understood by the Jews to mean. *He that cometh*; literally, *the coming One*. Another phrase by which the Jews designated the Messiah. *In the name of the Lord*, i. e. as his messenger, and clothed with his authority. *Hosanna in the highest.* This phrase has been variously interpreted. Some take it in the sense: (let there be) *Hosanna in the highest* (strains). But the original will

saying, *g* Hosanna to the Son of David: *h* Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

10 *i* And when he was come in-

*h* Ps. 118: 26; Ch. 23: 39. *i* Ma. 11: 15; Lu. 19: 45; Jn. 2: 13, 15.

hardly admit of this, and the better sense is: (let there be) *hosanna in the highest* (heavens), i. e. let the hosannas raised on earth in honor of the Messiah, be also acclaimed in heaven by saints and angels. See Ps. 148: 2. This note of acclamation is varied somewhat in the other evangelists. Mark adds, "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord," where David is regarded as the ancestor and type of the Messiah, and his kingdom is put for the Messianic reign. In Luke we find the remarkable expression, "peace in heaven," which seems to refer to every kind of good to be dispensed from heaven upon men. Some however think that these words were only added to fill out the parallelism. The next clause in Luke, "glory in the highest," is but the varied acclamation of "hosanna in the highest," found in Matthew and Mark. In these shouts of joy and praise, it would be strange if there was not a variety of utterance.

10, 11. *And when he was come*, &c. The reader, who would preserve the order of narration, should turn to John 12: 16-44, where we are told that the raising of Lazarus caused the people to go forth to meet him, and that the Pharisees were greatly troubled at this popular demonstration in his favor. John also relates the affecting incident of our Lord's weeping over Jerusalem, as he drew nigh and beheld it. *All the city was moved*; literally, *was shaken* as with an earthquake. The great multitude attending him, and their shouts of praise and joy, threw the whole city into commotion. *Who is this?* What person is it, who thus receives acclamations which belong only to the Messiah? They make this inquiry of one another, and also of the throng

to Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?

11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus <sup>k</sup> the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

12 ¶ <sup>l</sup> And Jesus went into the

<sup>k</sup> Ch. 2 : 23 ; Ln. 7 : 16 ; Jn. 6 : 14, & 7 : 40,  
& 9 : 17.

attending him, for the multitude reply, *this is Jesus the prophet* (by the force of the article, *the great or celebrated prophet*) of Galilee. So convinced were the people of his divine mission, that his obscure and humble origin, was no longer a stumbling block in the way of their acknowledgment of his claims, or deterred them from declaring to others, that he was from Nazareth, that most despised of all Galilean towns. As many of the procession were from Galilee, there may have been mingled with this reply, some feeling of sectional pride, that the Messiah was from one of their towns.

12. *And Jesus went, &c.* According to Mark, who follows more strictly the order of events, this cleansing of the temple took place, the day succeeding his triumphal entrance into Jerusalem. This order would require its insertion after v. 19 in Matthew, the incidents related in vs. 14-16 taking place when Jesus went into the temple, on the day of his public entry into the city. Alford attempts to harmonize Mark's chronology with that of Matthew and Luke, by supposing him to have placed the triumphal entry into the city a day too soon. His first entrance detailed by Mark (11 : 11) would then be a private one, taking place near the close of the day. On his return in the evening to Bethany, many Jews came to see him and Lazarus (John 12 : 9). These on the next day, their numbers swelled by those who had entered the preceding day into the city, and who now came forth to meet him, formed the triumphal procession. I cannot think this to be a well supported, or satisfactory solution of the difficulty. It seems quite unnatural to suppose our Lord, attended by such crowds, as we are told accom-

panied him from Jericho (see 20 : 29), should have come thus privately into the city, his public and triumphal entrance being deferred until the next day. But it is not strange that Matthew, who so often disregards the exact order of events, should have related as among the incidents of the first day, what in reality happened on the second day. *Temple of God.* It had been dedicated to the worship and service of God, and the money changers had no right to defile it with their secular occupations.

13 And said unto them, It is

<sup>l</sup> Ma. 11 : 11 ; Lu. 19 : 45 ; Jn. 2 : 15.  
<sup>m</sup> De. 14 : 25.

*Cast out*, i. e. drove forth. There was an air of authority and dignity, which awed them into obedience. His fame as a prophet endowed with great miraculous power, had doubtless reached the ears of these wicked men, and made them fear to disobey him. The people too were with him, all fully believing him to be a great prophet, and many that he was the long-expected Messiah. They did not dare on this account to refuse obedience. This incident shows, that although Jesus was the very type of mildness and love, yet when the honor of religion was concerned, he could put on an air of displeasure and severity, before which the boldest transgressors quailed. Thus will it be on the last day, when he shall sit on the throne of judgment, not only to acknowledge and reward his people, but to drive from his presence for ever all those who have persisted in rebellion against his rightful authority. *That sold and bought, &c.* The trade here referred to was in animals for sacrifice. In the time of Christ, it is not improbable that other articles of traffic were here disposed of. *In the temple*, i. e. the outward court of the Gentiles, in the porches of which this profanation took place. *Tables of the money changers*, i. e. the tables or



written, "My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

15 And when the chief priests

*n* Isa. 56 : 7.

counters, where these men sat to exchange foreign coin into Jewish, or large coins into smaller. The half-shekel tax (see N. on 17 : 24) was required to be paid in Jewish coin, and hence such worshippers as came up to the temple bringing Greek or Roman coins, were obliged to get them exchanged for Jewish money. But these money-changers had their own emolument in view, and were such cheats and knaves, that our Lord's assertion, that the temple was turned by them into a den of thieves, was almost literally true. *Sold doves* for sacrifices. When one was too poor to bring a lamb or kid for a trespass offering, he was permitted to bring in its stead, two turtle doves or two young pigeons (Levit. 5 : 7 ; 14 : 22).

13. *It is written.* The quotation is from Isa. 56 : 7, the words in the original prophecy, "for all people," being omitted. *My house.* In the prophetic writings, the temple of God is thus designated. *But ye have made it,* &c. These words are not a part of the quotation, but are used by Christ in the way of accommodation from Jer. 7 : 11. What was there said of the profanation of the temple by the idolatrous Jews, was again verified in its desecration by these wicked traders and money-changers. *A den of thieves.* Robbers and thieves have in every age betaken themselves to dens and caves, where they can enjoy their ill-gotten plunder in security. Hence the appropriateness of the expression as used here by our Lord.

14. *And the blind and lame,* &c. This took place on the day of his public entry into the city. See N. on v. 12. As soon as he entered the city, he pro-

ceeded to the temple, as the most suitable and appropriate place to instruct the people, and there he performed the miracles here spoken of. The enthusiasm of the people must have been greatly increased by this fresh display of his miraculous power. Hence it is not to be wondered at, that even the children joined in the acclamations of praise, and shouted their hosannas with the multitude.

16 And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus

*o* Je. 7 : 11; Ma. 11 : 17; Lu. 19 : 46.

ceeded to the temple, as the most suitable and appropriate place to instruct the people, and there he performed the miracles here spoken of. The enthusiasm of the people must have been greatly increased by this fresh display of his miraculous power. Hence it is not to be wondered at, that even the children joined in the acclamations of praise, and shouted their hosannas with the multitude.

15. *Chief priests and scribes.* Most of these, if not all, were members of the Sanhedrim, and had already determined on his death. See John 11 : 53, 57. *The wonderful things,* i. e. the miracles. Instead of being convinced by these credentials of his divine mission, they were exasperated thereby, and the more bent on putting him to death. *The children.* They had been drawn to the temple through curiosity, as children flock together to see any grand procession. *Crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna,* &c. While this circumstance arose in part from the natural fondness of children to imitate their elders, yet we may suppose that many of them, in view of the miracles which they saw, uttered as hearty and sincere shouts of praise, as did those of maturer years. By this we do not mean that they had any special illumination or strengthening of their mental powers, above what was natural to their age. They cried *hosanna* with the spirit and understanding of little children, and we rob this incident of its power and moral beauty, in attempting to explain it otherwise.

16. *Hearest thou,* &c. Are you so lost to what is proper and becoming, as to permit the application to yourself of such extravagant ascriptions of praise? Ought you to encourage such adula-

saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, <sup>r</sup> Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

17 ¶ And he left them, and went out of the city into <sup>q</sup> Bethany; and he lodged there.

<sup>p</sup> Ps. 8 : 2.

<sup>q</sup> Ma. 11 : 11; Jn. 11 : 18.

18 <sup>r</sup> Now in the morning, as he returned into the city, he hungered.

19 <sup>s</sup> And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let

<sup>r</sup> Ma. 11 : 12.

<sup>s</sup> Ma. 11 : 13.

tion? The question was evidently one of rebuke. They intimate their surprise at his consenting to be hailed as Messiah, and that too by young children. *Have ye never read, &c.* In this question our Savior implies, that if they had read the Scriptures with enlightened and believing minds, they would not have taken offence at the ascriptions of praise, bestowed upon him by the children in the temple. The passage is quoted from Ps. 8 : 2, where the works of God are represented as so grand and striking, that even little children are filled with emotions of wonder and praise. The original, "hast ordained strength," is rendered in the Septuagint version, "hast thou perfected praise," which gives the sense more accurately, for the sincere and spontaneous praise of little children in view of the divine works, constitute the very perfection or highest manifestation of praise. But if the admiration and praise of young children were thus awakened by the wonders of creation, how much more appropriate their utterance, when in the presence of him who was its Lord and Creator.

17. *And he left them;* literally, *left them wholly, forsook them,* the verb being intensive. He did not condescend to listen any longer to these cavilling and malignant enemies. See N. on 14 : 4. *Went out.* Mark says that it was late evening, when he went out unto Bethany. This village, celebrated in our Lord's history, as being the residence of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, was about fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, on the eastern slope of Mount Olivet. It is now a miserable village of about twenty families. *Lodged there.* In whose house we are not told,

but probably with the friends just named. As the twelve accompanied him, the hospitalities of several families were doubtless shared. Jesus left Jerusalem each night to avoid the snares of his enemies, and also, as Bloomfield well suggests, to give no cause of suspicion to the authorities, that he was affecting temporal power, by remaining in the city at night, a season so favorable for popular commotion.

17-19. THE BARREN FIG TREE. *Between Bethany and Jerusalem.* Third day of the week. Mark 11 : 12-19.

*In the morning.* This was on Tuesday of the week of his passion. *He hungered.* He had either left so early, as not to partake of the morning repast, or was unwilling that his devotions should be interrupted thereby. But on his way to the city, he became faint through want of food, and turned his eye upon a fig tree, in order to temporarily appease his hunger, from any fruit which might chance to have ripened upon it. Mark (11 : 13) informs us, that "the time of figs had not yet come," i. e. the usual season of the year for gathering them in. Some think that reference is had to the remnant of winter figs, which ripened late, and were sometimes gathered, as a delicious morsel in the spring. But the tree was cursed for not having borne fruit, not because a portion of the fruit previously borne, had not remained on the tree during the winter. The particularity with which the fact of its having leaves is mentioned, shows that the fruit of the present year, and not the remnant of the past year's fruit, is referred to. Trench seeks to avoid this difficulty, by boldly admitting that our Lord did not expect to find fruit upon this fig tree,

no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.

20 And when the disciples saw

† Ma. 11 : 20.

for the reason given in Mark, but that a great truth was intended to be symbolically taught, which was not necessarily based upon a verity, any more than a parable, which is told as true, although the facts are feigned, and is in one sense true, as enshrining the greater and higher truth intended to be taught. But this exposition is more ingenious than true. *And found nothing thereon*, &c. It was barren, having the appearance of being fruitful, but bearing nothing but leaves. As the leaves of the fig tree do not appear until after the fruit is formed, our Lord had reason to expect, from its full-leaved appearance, that it was laden with fruit, but when he drew near, he ascertained that it not only had no early ripened fruit, but none at all of any sort upon its branches. Hence it deserved the curse pronounced upon it, a curse emblematic of that which shall be visited on all who make great pretensions to holiness, and yet show that they abuse their privileges, and are unproductive of good to themselves and to others. Some think that the destruction of Jerusalem was the event, typified by this curse pronounced upon the barren fig tree. However this may be, the great lesson is taught, that all in every age and country, who do not bring forth the fruits of holiness, will incur God's displeasure and withering curse. This incident of the barren fig tree should be read in connection with Luke 13: 6-9, where the same general lesson is taught. *And presently*. It immediately began to wither and die, although the disciples did not notice it, until the morning of the next day (see Mark 11 : 20). *It withered away*, i. e. became dry and dead. As it regards a very senseless objection, advanced by some against his thus cursing an inanimate tree, as though it had been guilty of wrong doing,

it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!

21 Jesus answered and said

we may reply, as we did to the objection against the destruction of the swine, that had ten thousand trees been stricken dead of vegetable life, it would have been as nothing, in case some truth having reference to the salvation of men, could thereby have been impressed more strongly upon the mind. That the most impressive lessons of instruction have been drawn from this fig tree, no one will pretend to deny, and this is an ample reason, why our Lord selected this method of showing the doom of graceless professors of religion.

20-22. THE BARREN FIG TREE WITHERS AWAY. Fourth day of the week. Mark 11 : 20-26.

20. Our Lord, after having pronounced this curse upon the fig tree, entered the city, cleansed the temple of those who were defiling it with traffic, and taught the people who were there assembled, after which he went out to the mount of Olives (Luke 21 : 37), and there spent the night. This was at so late an hour, that the darkness prevented them, at that time, from seeing the withered condition of the fig tree. On the next morning, which was that of the fourth day, as they were returning to the city (Mark 11 : 20; Luke 21 : 38), the disciples took notice of the fig tree, now dried and withered up, and expressed their astonishment at the sudden change. *They marvelled*. On the preceding day they had seen it thick set with branches and leaves, having the appearance of being fruitful, but now it was dried and shrivelled up, as though it had been dead for years. No wonder that it arrested their attention, and filled them with astonishment. *How soon*, &c. Such a decay was the process usually of a long time, but here it had taken place in twenty-four hours.

21. *If ye have faith and doubt not,*

unto them, Verily I say unto you, "If ye have faith, and <sup>x</sup>doubt not, ye shall not only do this *which is done* to the fig tree, <sup>y</sup>but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

22 And <sup>z</sup>all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

<sup>u</sup> Ch. 17: 20; Lu. 17: 6. <sup>x</sup> Ja. 1: 6. <sup>y</sup> 1 Co. 13: 2. <sup>z</sup> Ch. 7: 7; Ma. 11: 24; Lu. 11: 9; Ja. 5: 16; 1 Jo. 3: 22, & 5: 14.

i. e. do not hesitate through unbelief. This union of the positive and negative form of assertion, is often employed for the sake of emphasis. A notable example of its use is found in John 1: 20. *This which is done to the fig tree; literally, this of the fig tree.* The ellipsis is well supplied in our common translation. *To this mountain*, i. e. the mount of Olives, on which they then stood. *Be thou removed, &c.* See N. on 17: 20. In Luke 17: 6, this proverbial expression is varied; the words *sycamine tree* being substituted for *mountain*. Both forms of expression denote the performance of things to human view impossible.

22. *And all things, &c.* This promise is to be limited in the nature of the case, to such things as are proper for us to receive, and suitable for God to bestow. Genuine faith embraces no other request. Hence the objection advanced against this passage, that it teaches that the wildest cravings of the mind are to be met, provided that the petitioner works himself into the belief that whatever he asks for he shall receive, is of no force, inasmuch as it is based upon a false interpretation of the passage. The prayer of faith, rightly considered, is that which is offered by one, who places entire confidence in all God's promises. But nowhere has he promised, that he will do this or that particular thing for his children. He has pledged to them, on certain conditions, the richest and most abundant spiritual blessings. But

23 ¶ <sup>a</sup> And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and <sup>b</sup>said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?

24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell

<sup>a</sup> Ma. 11: 27; Lu. 20: 1. <sup>b</sup> Ex. 2: 14; Ac. 4: 7, & 7: 27.

even these are connected with, and are the result of great diversity of trials and discipline here on earth. He acts like a wise sovereign. Some of his people he calls to pass through much earthly sorrow and tribulation. Others he blesses with earthly prosperity. He dispenses to some and withdraws from others, temporal blessings, for reasons known only to himself. But upon all who believe in Jesus, and live lives of godliness, whatever may have been their earthly trials or condition, will be bestowed eternal felicity in the heavenly world. Prayer then of the highest type, is that which asks, with child-like confidence in God's word and promises, for just that which in his infinite wisdom he may see fit to bestow. We are not precluded by this from asking for particular blessings, but yet we should always say, "not our will but thine, O Lord, be done." The promise made here to the apostles, most unquestionably had primary reference to the miraculous powers with which they were endowed, as confirmatory of their apostolic mission. But in its restricted sense, as above explained, it may be regarded as a promise made to all God's people. Many things were primarily spoken to the apostles, which, when those features are left out of account, that rendered them peculiarly applicable to them, may be considered as addressed to all the followers of Christ.

23-32. CHRIST'S AUTHORITY QUESTIONED. PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS.



me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

25 The baptism of John, whence

*Jerusalem.* Fourth Day of the Week. Mark 11 : 27-33 ; Luke 20 : 1-8.

23. *And when he was come, &c.* Each morning, as he came into the city, he proceeded at once to the temple, as the most suitable place for imparting religious instruction. *The chief priests, &c.* They were always on hand to find some occasion to accuse him before the Roman governor, or to awaken the prejudices of the Jews. They seem on this, as on the previous occasion (v. 15), to have gathered together in considerable numbers in order to overawe the people, and to disconcert him by their presence. *As he was teaching.* As we can hardly suppose that the people would have suffered the priests and elders to rudely interrupt him in his discourse, their question was probably proposed to him, during some temporary pause in his teaching and preaching. *By what authority, i. e. in what character or by what commission.* As guardians of the temple, and of the religious worship of the Jews, they deemed themselves privileged to demand his authority, for assuming the office of public teacher and reformer. Had they come to him in the spirit of candor, and a sincere desire to know the truth, they would have received a direct answer to their reply. But the well known fact, that during his whole ministry, they had absolutely refused to admit the overwhelming evidence of his Messiahship, showed the cavilling and unbelieving spirit with which they now approached him. In the temper, therefore, with which they proposed the question, had our Lord replied, that he did these things by virtue of his Messiahship, they would have accused him to the Roman governor, as a seditious person, stirring up a revolt by claiming to be the Messianic king of the Jews. The time had not yet come for such an open declaration of his office and character, and he therefore replies by asking in turn a question,

was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say,

which his interrogators were bound by the custom of those times to answer first.

25, 26. *The baptism of John, &c.* This is put by a common figure of speech, for the whole of John's public ministry, especially his authority to preach and baptize. *Whence was it, &c.* This question evinced the most profound wisdom, and had the effect to seal up their mouths, as though they were dumb. *From heaven, i. e. of heavenly origin,* having the divine authority and sanction. In like manner, *of man* is to be referred to human authority and sanction. *And they reasoned, &c.* This does not refer to mental reasoning confined to the breast of each, but to an open consultation with one another, yet in such low tones, as probably not to be heard by any save their own number. *If we shall say, &c.* Here was a dilemma which they were not slow to perceive. If they acknowledged the divine authority of John, a second question would follow, why they did not believe in him, especially in his repeated and unequivocal testimony as to the divine mission of Jesus. Such a reply would be, therefore, a condemnation of themselves, for rejecting John's testimony. On the other hand, if to avoid this, they should openly avow their belief that John was an impostor, they feared that the people, enraged at their vilification of him whom they all regarded as a prophet, would stone them (see Luke 20 : 6). The only course left was to confess their inability to answer his question. *The people* who were assembled in great numbers in the temple. *For all hold, &c.* This constitutes the reason why they feared the people, should they deny the divine origin of John's baptism. *As a prophet.* In Mark : "counted John that he was a prophet indeed." See also Luke 20 : 6. The word prophet has here its more general signification, of one who is divinely commis-

From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?

26 But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; ° for all hold John as a prophet.

27 And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And

*c* Ch. 14 : 5; Ma. 6 : 20; Lu. 20 : 6.

sioned to teach, instruct, and reform his fellow-men.

27. *We cannot tell*; literally, *we do not know*. Our Lord's reply, "neither tell I you," verbally conforms to their inward thoughts, *we will not tell*, thus showing his knowledge of the insincerity of their answer. But according to their own avowal, how unfit were they to sit in judgment upon the character and claims of Jesus, while confessing themselves to be so profoundly ignorant of the true character of John. Our Lord very properly refused to answer the questions of such men. Perhaps there is no instance on record, where the mouth of gainsayers was so effectually sealed up, as on this occasion. But all this tended to exasperate to such a degree these wicked men, that at the trial, condemnation, and execution of Jesus, they appeared scarcely other than fiends incarnate.

28. *But what think ye?* What is your opinion of what I am about to say? See N. on 17 : 25. *A certain man*, &c. There is no difficulty in referring the man here spoken of to God the Father of all. But there is some difference of opinion, as to what classes of persons are designated by the two sons. Some refer them to the Jews and Gentiles. But while in its wider application and scope, it may be thus referred, the context seems to point out this parable as aimed at the scribes and Pharisees, who professed much but did little, and are therefore aptly represented by the son, whose profession of readiness to obey was followed by gross disobedience. If this reference be true, then the son who refused to obey, but afterwards repented and

he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

28 ¶ But what think ye? *A certain man* had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard.

29 He answered and said, I

did his duty, may well be regarded as designating the abandoned and irreligious. This interpretation is confirmed by what our Lord says in conclusion (v. 31), that the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God, before the scribes and priests whom he was addressing. *The first*. This does not refer to priority of birth or station, but is to be taken in an ordinal sense, as we say *the first, the second; the one, the other, &c.* *Go work to-day, &c.* This denotes in figurative language the service which God requires of men. The word *to-day*, does not imply that God's service is to be of limited duration, but conforms simply to what actually takes place in human affairs. Nothing is more common than for the head of a family to say to his sons: Go and do such a piece of work *to-day*, and *to-morrow* do so and so.

29. *I will not*. This refusal, so decided and disrespectful to the father, aptly represents the manner in which God's commands are treated by the profane and irreligious. Persons of this class not unfrequently give utterance to their disregard of the duties and obligations of religion, in almost these very words. *But afterwards, &c.* The grace of God and the workings of conscience produce a reaction. Repentance and obedience follow upon this outburst of a proud, rebellious heart. The notoriously wicked man becomes a meek, humble, obedient child of God. He enters the vineyard, and cheerfully and faithfully performs his allotted task.

30. The second son is now, in similar terms, directed to go and labor in the vineyard. No stress, as Alford re-

will not; but afterward he repented, and went.

30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I *go*, sir: and went not.

31 Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, <sup>d</sup> Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the

<sup>d</sup> Lu. 7: 29, 50.

marks, is to be laid on the order of calling. It is simply that both were required in the same terms to perform a given labor. The order might have been reversed, and yet the sentiment have been unchanged. *I go, sir*. The original is highly expressive of the careless, indifferent assent which this worthless son gave to his father's command. It is simply *I, sir*, like our common *aye, sir*, and was intended as a prompt and cheerful assent, to conceal the intention of disobedience which was in the heart. So the Pharisees were full of professed zeal for the honor and service of God. They were ready to thank Him, that they were not as other men. But in every essential of piety they were deficient. *They went not* into God's vineyard, although so forward in their professions of obedience.

31. *Whether of them twain*, i. e. which of the two. *Did the will*, i. e. obeyed the command. *They say unto him, The first*. The scribes and priests could not but admit this. It is probable, however, that they did not yet fully apprehend the point of the parable, or they would have given a less prompt and direct response to the question. *Verily I say*, &c. This is the application of the parable, and helps us to determine, as above remarked (Note on v. 28), what classes are represented by the two sons. Publicans (see N. on 5: 46) and harlots are here representative of the lowest and most degraded classes of the community. *Go* (literally *are going*) *into the kingdom of God*, i. e.

harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

32 For <sup>e</sup> John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; <sup>f</sup> but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

33 ¶ Hear another parable: There was a certain householder,

<sup>e</sup> Ch. 3: 1, &c. <sup>f</sup> Lu. 3: 12, 13.

are becoming partakers of the blessings and privileges of the children of God. *Before you*. This does not imply that the Pharisees would ever enter the kingdom spoken of. The simple idea is that the most vicious and degraded portions of the Jewish people, were far more likely to be converted and become partakers of the Messianic kingdom, than the scribes and Pharisees with all their boasted zeal and piety. This was true under Christ's own ministry, and amply verified in the subsequent history of the church in Judea.

32. This verse illustrates and confirms the sentiment just uttered. John had come to them *in the way of righteousness* (i. e. in the practice of righteousness, or in the austere observance of the Mosaic law, which ought to have recommended him to the Pharisees, who held so strictly to a legal righteousness), but they believed him not (see v. 27), and were made no better by his ministry. *But the publicans* (Luke 3: 12) *and harlots believed him*, and were many of them thoroughly reformed. *When ye had seen it*, i. e. the wondrous reformation which John's preaching had wrought in these wicked persons. *Repented not afterward*, &c. i. e. were yet obdurate, and did not repent so as to believe on him. So the example of the son, who at first refused obedience, and afterwards repented, was lost upon the other, who had no intention of obeying, although externally so respectful to his parent.

33-46. PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN. *Jerusalem*. Fourth day

which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged

g Ps. 80 : 9 ; Cant. 8 : 11 ; Is. 5 : 1 ; Je. 2 : 21 ;  
Ma. 12 : 1 ; Lu. 20 : 9.

of the Week. Mark 12 : 1-12 ; Luke 20 : 9-19. This parable of the wicked husbandmen was spoken immediately or soon after that of the two sons, and was designed to show the guilt of the Jewish nation in rejecting God's Son, and the justice of the punishment, which would be inflicted upon them for their impiety and unbelief. Luke says that he spake this parable to the people. It was in the hearing, however, of the chief priests and Pharisees (see v. 45).

33. *Hear another parable.* The form of expression implies some stir and excitement among his auditors, which our Lord hushed by calling their attention to another parable. Perhaps the Pharisees were giving indication of their displeasure by rude interruptions, or preparing to leave him in order to plot his death (see v. 46). *Householder.* See N. on 21 : 1. *Planted a vineyard.* Vineyards were generally planted on the declivities of hills and mountains. The vines were propagated by means of suckers, and were of four kinds, those that ran on the ground, those that grew upright of themselves, those that adhered to a single prop, and those that covered a square frame. They sometimes grew to a great height, and formed a shady bower, which gave rise to the expression, "sitting under one's own vine and fig tree," i. e. enjoying a peaceful and happy life. Olshausen thinks that the vineyard typifies the kingdom of God, at first identical with all Israel, but after their rejection, consisting of believers among both Jews and Gentiles. But the most simple and best sustained view is theirs, who refer it to the covenant privileges, enumerated in Rom. 9 : 4, which the Jews failed to improve, and of which in due time, they were as a nation deprived. *Hedged it round about* against animals and marauders of every sort. To this defence was frequently added that of a wall. Compare Numb. 22 :

a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husband-

24 ; Ps. 80 : 12 ; Prov. 24 : 31 ; Isa. 5 : 5. *Digged a winepress* (or winevat) *in it.* These winepresses or troughs consisted of two receptacles. Into the first, which was built of stone or hewn out of a large rock, the grapes, when gathered, were thrown and trodden out by men. Near to the bottom of this was an opening, through which the juice flowed off into another and lower vat or trough, which as appears from the Greek word, ὑπολήμιον, made use of by Mark in the parallel passage, is the one here meant by Matthew. As this cistern was below the other, it was almost of necessity subterranean, and hence the expression *he digged a winepress.* *Built a tower* (see Isa. 5 : 2). This turret or watchtower answered the twofold purpose of a place of abode for the keeper of the vineyard, and a post of observation to protect it from thieves, and animals, especially dogs and foxes. See Cant. 1 : 6 ; 2 : 15. In Oriental countries, they are now found thirty feet square, and eighty feet high. By the Mosaic law (Deut. 23 : 24), the keeper was commanded not to prohibit the passing traveller from plucking the grapes to eat by the way, provided he carried none away in a vessel. These circumstances are not to be taken into account in the application of the parable, being added only to show that the vineyard was in a perfect condition, when it was let out to these wicked husbandmen (see Isa. 5 : 4). *And let it out.* The custom of renting houses and lands was as common in ancient as in modern times. The rent was paid in money or a certain share of the products of the earth. *Husbandmen* ; literally, *tillers of the earth*, but here, *vine dressers.* *Went into a far country* ; literally, *went away from home*, i. e. went abroad on his travels. This seems to be added as a reason why he rented out his vineyard, and sent his servants for the fruits, instead of meeting the husband-



men, and <sup>h</sup>went into a far country :

34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, <sup>i</sup>that they might receive the fruits of it.

<sup>h</sup> Ch. 25 : 14, 15.    <sup>i</sup> Cant. 8 : 11, 12.

men in person; and is not, as some absurdly think, a representation of the great distance of earth from heaven. It has no special bearing upon the application of the parable, and is only added to make the picture more natural and animated. The great point of illustration thus far in the parable is, that God, here represented as the owner of the vineyard, had bestowed upon the Jewish people great privileges and covenant blessings, from whom in return, he demanded love and obedience. This is represented by the vineyard, put in complete order and let out to vine dressers, at a stipulated rent to be paid in the fruits thereof.

34. *When the time, &c.* The owner did not demand his share of the fruits of the vineyard, until the season of the vintage. Thus God made no untimely or unreasonable demand upon his covenant people, but only for what they had the ability to render unto Him, had they been so inclined. *He sent his servants, i. e. the Jewish prophets. That they might receive, &c.* This circumstance is not to be pressed too far in the application of the parable, as the prophets and religious teachers sent to the Jews, could carry nothing from them to God, in the sense in which the servants would convey the fruit of the vineyard to its owner. But the prophets demanded the service and love due to him from his people, and in this sense the parable was highly applicable.

35. *Took his servants, and beat one, &c.* How truly does this express the rejection of God's messages by the Jewish nation. The various forms of persecution which his servants, the prophets, underwent are here portrayed by beating, stoning, &c. The word translated *beat*, literally signifies *flayed*.

35 <sup>k</sup> And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

36 Again he sent other servants

<sup>k</sup> 2 Ch. 24 : 21, & 36 : 16; Ne. 9 : 26; ch. 5 : 12, & 23 : 34, 37; Ac. 7 : 52; 1 Th. 2 : 15; He. 11 : 36, 37.

Scourging was sometimes administered so severely as to take off the skin, and hence, *to flay* is taken frequently in the sense of *to scourge*, the effect being put for the cause. Stoning was generally, but not always, followed by death. Hence Mark (who with Luke varies the narrative by representing the servants as sent singly one after another, and each more roughly handled than the preceding) says that "they cast stones at one, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled." See Acts 14 : 19.

36. *Again he sent, &c.* Through the whole line of Jewish history, with the exception of the 400 years immediately preceding the advent of Christ, prophets had been sent to that nation. With them also had been deposited the Scriptures of the Old Testament, written by holy men, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Thus God was continually keeping before them his demands, and calling upon them to return to their duty, and put away from themselves their wicked doings. *More than the first.* This was to add weight and influence to their mission. They were more in number, and doubtless of higher station than those first sent. This made more flagrant the sin of the husbandmen, in thus rejecting and maltreating them. Thus as the number of prophets sent to the Jewish nation increased, and the Scriptures of the Old Testament became more voluminous and complete, their sin in rejecting these multiplied efforts to reclaim them became greater and more worthy of punishment. *And they did, &c.* They not only felt no compunction for their shameful and cruel treatment of the preceding messengers, but even waxed more hardened and indifferent to the

more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.

37 But last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

38 But when the husbandmen

*l* Ps. 2: 8; He. 1: 2. *m* Ps. 2: 2; ch. 26: 3, & 27: 1; Jn. 11: 53; Ac. 4: 27.

rightful claims of the owner of the vineyard. Such is the hardening process of sin, whether existing in an individual, or a whole community. Mark says, *they sent him* (the singular pronoun taken in a collective sense) *away shamefully handled*; literally, *dishonored, insulted*, referring probably to such outrages as Hanun perpetrated on David's servants (2 Sam. 10: 4).

37. *But last of all.* He had exhausted every means but this, to bring them to their duty. *He sent unto them his Son.* Some have objected to this feature of the parable, on the ground that no one with the common feelings of a father, would have exposed his son to such wicked wretches. But it is evidently spoken of one, whose desire to effect their reformation outweighed every other consideration. There is no improbability in the existence of such kindness of heart, as would be willing to make the last appeal spoken of here. It was necessary also that this agency should be introduced, in order that the parable might conform to the fact that God sent his Son, after having exhausted every other means of bringing his people to submission and obedience. The object, as Doddridge remarks, is not to show the prudence of the father, but the wickedness of the Jews and the patient forbearance of God. *They will reverence my son.* They will treat him with respect. The sight of him will awaken feelings of reverence in them, and they will cease from their wicked rebellion and rejection of my claims. Such was the hope of the owner of the vineyard, but we are not to suppose from this, that the prescience of God did not extend to the certain rejection of his Son by the Jews. The application of a

saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; " come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.

39 " And they caught him, and

*n* Ch. 26: 50, &c.; Ma. 14: 46, &c.; Lu. 22: 54, &c.; Jn. 18: 12, &c.; Ac. 2: 23.

parable embracing human thoughts and actions, to the doings of the infinite God, is always to be modified and limited by the nature of the subject, and the poverty of language to do more than shadow forth the operations of the divine mind.

38. *Saw the son* as he was approaching, at a distance. *They said among themselves.* Their wicked act in killing the son was the more sinful, in that it was the result of previous concert. So the crucifixion of our Lord was not the result of a sudden excitement, but of a preconcerted plan formed in a meeting of the Sanhedrim, at which the high priest himself presided. See John 11: 47-53. *This is the heir.* According to Mark (12: 6), he was the only and well beloved son of the owner of the vineyard. There was no other heir of the estate. They were so infatuated as to suppose, that by putting him out of the way, the property would be theirs. They seem to have lost all fear of the return of the lord of the vineyard himself. Thus it is that wicked men are generally blind to the consequences of their misdeeds. The appositeness of this portion of the parable to the mission of God's well beloved and only begotten Son (John 3: 16), constituted in his mediatorial office the heir of all things (Heb 1: 2), is too obvious to require any comment. *Let us seize on his inheritance.* The original strongly expresses their eager desire for the property, *let us lay fast hold of, let us put our grasp upon*, the implication being, that no power could wrest it from their hands. They acknowledge the inheritance to be his, but express their determination to get possession of it, and hold it against the claims of its rightful owner.

cast *him* out of the vineyard, and slew *him*.

40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

41 °They say unto him, °He

o See Lu. 20 : 16. p Lu. 21 : 44; He. 2 : 3.

39. *They caught him*; literally, *having seized him*, in order to cast him out of the vineyard. Some think that the parable is here shaped, to meet the circumstances of our Lord's crucifixion, who was led out of the city and put to death. This is no argument against interpreting the vineyard, as was done in Note on v. 33, for Jerusalem, as the seat and centre of these covenant blessings possessed by the Jewish nation, might well represent the vineyard, out of which the Son of God was led to be crucified. But as a minor point in the parable, it may not be pressed too far. It would have been very unnatural for the vine dressers to have slain the son and heir in the vineyard, and it may, therefore, be nothing more than a circumstance designed to render complete the parabolic picture.

40. *When the lord, &c.* It is assumed here that the owner of the vineyard would certainly return, and call these wicked men to account. Our Lord, therefore, without rehearsing any farther the particulars of the parable, inquires of the Pharisees, what they supposed would be done to them on his return. He thus brings them to pronounce sentence of condemnation upon themselves.

41. *He will miserably destroy, &c.* The original has a play of words (see N. on 5 : 19), which Bloomfield well renders: *he will bring these wretches to a wretched death.* According to Mark and Luke, our Lord pronounces these words himself, and Luke represents the scribes as ejaculating, *God forbid.* The apparent discrepancy is removed, by supposing that Christ repeated the words of condemnation spoken by the scribes in reply to his question, before they apprehended the scope of the

will miserably destroy those wicked men, ° and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

q Ac. 13 : 46, & 15 : 7, & 18 : 6, & 28 : 28; Ro. 9, & 10, & 11.

parable, and that while he was thus solemnly and emphatically repeating their reply, with some gesture which betokened its application to themselves, stricken with horror, at the strong terms in which they had pronounced their own condemnation, they exclaimed, *God forbid.* I cannot agree with Alford, that the people seem to be referred to in the words, *they say*, or with Olshausen and Steir, that the Pharisees *pretended* to miss the sense of the parable. It was, as Alford well remarks, a self-condemnation, similar to that in 27 : 25, although in this instance indirectly spoken, while there they invoked the horrible curse of innocent blood directly upon themselves and their children. *Will let out, &c.* The scribes and priests did not see the drift of the parable, or they would not so unhesitatingly have pronounced their own condemnation, and the calling of the Gentiles to the covenant blessings and privileges, which they had themselves forfeited. See Rom. 11 : 7, 17. *Which shall render him, &c.* This does not imply that among these husbandmen, to whom the vineyard was afterwards let, some would not be found who would fail also to render in their season the fruits of the vineyard to its owner. But the great principle is laid down, that whoever makes an improper use of God's blessings, shall be deprived of them. Others shall succeed to these blessings, which, if they use them aright, shall be theirs for ever. But a disregard of the trust reposed in them, will be followed by the same rejection, which was visited upon their faithless and disobedient predecessors. Thus while this parable has primary reference to the rejection of the Jews, and calling in of the Gentiles, it illus-

42 Jesus saith unto them, <sup>r</sup> Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the

<sup>r</sup> Ps. 118 : 22; Is. 28 : 16; Ma. 12 : 10; Lu. 20 : 17; Ac. 4 : 11; Ep. 2 : 20; 1 Pe. 2 : 6, 7.

trates also the dealing of God with individuals, who despise his mercies and refuse him obedience.

42. *Jesus said unto them.* This was spoken in reference to the exclamation, *God forbid*, which, according to Luke, they made when they saw fully the drift of the parable. "He beheld them and said." Luke. He looked upon them with earnestness and solemnity. *Did ye never read, &c.* Christ here calls their attention to a passage, which predicts the very doom, which they had unwittingly pronounced upon themselves, but in respect to which, when they saw the point of its application, they had exclaimed, *God forbid, let it not be so.* The word *scriptures* or *writings* refers to the Old Testament, sometimes called the *holy Scriptures* (Rom. 1 : 2). *The stone which the builders, &c.* The quotation is from Ps. 118 : 22, where the reference is evidently to the Messiah, whose rejection is predicted under the imagery of a building-stone, disapproved by the builders, and thrown aside as worthless. *The same is become, &c.* The stone (i. e. Christ) was rejected by the Jewish builders, but upon it, as *the head (stone) of the corner, or chief corner-stone*, the edifice of the Christian dispensation was to rest. Compare Eph. 2 : 20-22. Commentators find in the binding together of the two walls by the corner-stone, the union of the Jews and Gentiles in Christ. Such seems to be the argument in Eph. 2 : 11-22. *This is the Lord's doing, &c.* The rejection of this stone by the Jewish builders, as wholly unfit for building purposes, and its adoption by the Great Builder, as the chief corner-stone in the glorious edifice which He was erecting, was so marvellous, that it could be referred only to the inscrutable wisdom and pur-

pose of God. It is not implied in the prophecy here quoted, that the stone had not all the essential properties, which rendered it suitable for the use of the building. The point which was marvellous, was its rejection by the Jewish builders, when possessed, as it was, of such properties. But they were misled by its external appearance. So in the rejection of Jesus of Nazareth. He had shown himself possessed of all that was excellent and lovely. He had wrought the most stupendous miracles. His doctrines and precepts were of the purest and most exalted kind. He had given abundant proof of his divine mission. But his low birth, poverty, association with the poor and despised, and opposition to the pride and selfishness of the scribes and Pharisees, rendered him in their estimation of no account. They rejected him because they were blind to his true character, and this blindness was the result of their obstinacy and hardness of heart. *In our eyes*, i. e. before our eyes, or in our estimation.

43 Therefore I say unto you, <sup>s</sup> The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a

<sup>s</sup> Ch. 8 : 12.

Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

43. *Therefore, i. e.* on this account, or in accordance with this scripture. *The kingdom of God.* The privileges and blessings of the Messiah's kingdom. *Shall be taken from you.* Our Lord here declares in plain terms, what he had previously taught in the parable of the wicked husbandmen. *A nation*, i. e. the Gentiles, the singular being used in contrast with the Jewish nation. Some refer it to the nation or class of persons, whether Jews or Gentiles, who are the followers of Christ. So Alford, who cites in confirmation of this view, 1 Pet. 2 : 9; Acts 15 : 14. But while it is true that the followers of Christ constitute his only real and peculiar people, yet this restricted use of the word *nation*, does not comport with the



nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

44 And whosoever 'shall fall

*t* Is. 8 : 14, 15 ; Zec. 12 : 3 ; Lu. 20 : 18 ; Ro. 9 : 33 ; 1 Pe. 2 : 8.

scope of this passage, referring, as it manifestly does, to the general rejection of the Jewish nation and the calling in of the Gentiles to the privileges and blessings, which they had forfeited through unbelief. Compare Rom. 11 : 11-25. *Bringing forth the fruits thereof.* The language is borrowed from the hire or rent of the vineyard. As the good and faithful husbandmen, to whom the vineyard was rented after the wicked men were dispossessed of its use, would bring to the owner his portion of the fruits, so in God's spiritual vineyard, the Gentiles, to whom the gospel was to be sent, would receive it with joy (see Acts. 13 : 46-48), and improve its blessings and privileges to the glory of God.

44. *And whosoever shall fall, &c.* The prophetic metaphor of the rejected stone is here again recurred to. But there is some difficulty in reaching the precise idea contained in the language made use of. The general sense is clear, that whoever opposes himself to the rule of the Messiah shall be destroyed. But what position has this corner-stone in the building that it can be a stumbling-stone to the passer by, and at the same time be in a position to fall upon one who places himself rashly beneath it? Some attempt to avoid this difficulty, by supposing the stone to be placed upright against the corner, as a buttress to protect it from external violence, and that the incautious, as they passed along, would be in danger of stumbling against it, or causing it even to fall to his own or some other person's destruction. But this is unnatural and far-fetched. A stone in such a position could not easily be removed from its base, for in such a case, it would defeat the very purpose for which it was supposed to have been erected, and would not be suffered to remain to endanger people's lives who passed under

on this stone, shall be broken : but on whomsoever it shall fall, "it will grind him to powder.

*u* Is. 60 : 12 ; Da. 2 44.

it. Besides this is not the position of the stone in the new spiritual edifice. It is *the head (stone) of the corner, a foundation-stone*, and not one serving merely to protect the corner of the building. It is better therefore to regard the stone as here referred to in its twofold aspect of a *stone of stumbling* (see 1 Pet. 2 : 8), and an *overhanging rock* irrespective of its position in the edifice. The drapery of the figure is somewhat changed. The stone is viewed in a different position than that assigned it in the building. As it lay on the ground, it would prove a stone of stumbling to one who carelessly passed along, and a position might also be given it, for the sake of conveying the idea of complete destruction, in which it might fall with crushing weight upon some one who placed himself beneath it. The sentiment illustrated is the various degrees of ruin, which follows the rejection of Christ, as the fall of a heavy stone upon one is attended with a more terrible result, than the mere stumbling over it. How dreadful must be the fate of such as are crushed beneath this stone, when he who stumbles over it shall be broken, or, as the word literally signifies, *shall be dashed in pieces, broken up, or crushed together.* Their fate is depicted in the next clause. *Will grind him to powder* ; literally, *give him to be winnowed by the winds*, i. e. will so crush him to pieces, that he will be dissipated like chaff by the wind. See Dan. 2 : 34, 35. This does not involve the idea of a winnowing process, by which the worthless chaff is removed and the pure wheat retained, but such a crushing, grinding fall of the stone, that the whole man is reduced to powder, or made chaff of. This creates no confusion in the parable, as Alford intimates, but is one of the strongest and most natural expressions to denote complete destruction.

45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because <sup>x</sup>they took him for a prophet.

<sup>x</sup> Ver. 11; Lu. 7: 15; Jno. 7: 40.

45, 46. *And when the chief priests, &c.* They now fully perceived the design of the parable of the wicked husbandmen, and were exasperated to such a degree, that they were restrained from laying violent hands upon him, only through fear of the people, who regarded him as a prophet, and were ready to protect him from violence. *But when they sought, &c.* It would seem from this, that they made some demonstration of their evil intention, but were checked by the evident determination of the people to protect him. *Because they took him for a prophet; literally, since, indeed, they held him as a prophet.* They regarded him as a divinely appointed teacher.

#### CHAPTER XXII.

1-14. PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON. *Jerusalem.* Fourth day of the Week. As the chief priests and scribes had gone away in a rage (Mark 12: 12), Jesus spake this parable of the marriage of the king's son unto the people. Its object is like that of the preceding parable, to set forth the rejection of the Jews, and the admission of the Gentiles to the blessings of the gospel. But in a secondary sense, it is also applicable to all in every age, who reject the offers of salvation through Christ. This parable has many points of resemblance with the one spoken in Luke 14: 15-24, but being delivered at a later date in our Lord's ministry, when his enemies had become more infuriated, it is an advance on that, both in the discourteous terms in which the invitation was refused, and in the penalty attached thereto by the king.

2. *The kingdom of heaven, i. e. its*

#### CHAPTER XXII.

AND Jesus answered "and spake unto them again by parables, and said,

2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,

3 And sent forth his servants

<sup>a</sup> Lu. 14: 16; Re. 19: 7, 9.

administration or dispensation, in the rejection and condemnation of those who refuse its proffered blessings. *A certain king.* The householder of the preceding parable. *A marriage; literally, a marriage feast.* Such feasts usually continued seven days, and were celebrated with great pomp and rejoicings. This must not be regarded as the exact counterpart of the great marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19: 9), for there the bride is the church, which would make the bride here to be the invited guests, an absurdity, which would destroy the verisimilitude of the parable. It may also be remarked that the marriage feast of the Lamb, is the consummation of the union of believers with him (see Eph. 5: 27), the one here represents their induction into his spiritual household, their first espousals to him. Alford attempts to avoid this difficulty, by regarding this ceremony as an enthronization, in which the people are considered as being espoused to their prince, and refers to Ps. 45: 10-17. All this is unnecessary, if we regard the parable as a simple narration of a wedding feast, and designed to illustrate, by the manner in which the invitation was received, the rejection of the gospel message primarily by the Jewish nation, and in a secondary sense, by all who refuse its invitations and demands. *For his son,* at the marriage of his son. This could not be a ceremony of enthronization, unless the father had abdicated in favor of his son.

3. *And sent forth his servants, &c.* On festive occasions like this, invitations were issued some time previous, in order that the guests might be in a

to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

4 Again, he sent forth other

servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: <sup>b</sup> my oxen and *my fatlings are killed*, and all

*b* Pr. 9: 2.

general state of readiness (see Luke 14: 17). When the feast was fully prepared, the servants were sent to call those who had been previously invited (see Esth. 5: 8; 6: 14). As the persons here invited had been furnished with ample time to make the necessary preparations for this wedding feast, their refusal to come, at the second summons, was the more insulting and inexcusable. This of course represents God's messages and invitations of mercy, conveyed to the Jewish nation by his servants the prophets. The servants who were now sent to inform them that the feast was all ready, must of necessity be referred to John the Baptist, the Twelve, and the Seventy, and as far as Christ was a minister of the gospel, to him also, who said "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (11: 28). *That were bidden*, not *about to be bidden*, as some render it, regardless alike of the original Greek, and of Luke 14: 16, 17, where a previous invitation is expressly referred to. *And they would not come*. They refused to obey the summons.

4. *Other servants*. The same idea of employing servants of more weight and influence to convey the second message, is brought to view here, as in the parable of the wicked husbandmen. The great mercy and forbearance of God is represented by these repeated invitations. Alford and Trench refer this second invitation to the preaching of the apostles, after the *great Sacrifice was offered*. But this is pressing the minor points of the parable too far. The oxen and fatlings had all been slain and prepared, before the servants referred to in v. 3 had been sent forth, otherwise had they come immediately as they were bidden, they must of necessity have been compelled to wait a long time for the slaughter, preparation, and cooking of the animals to be served up

to the guests. The parable must not be rendered unnatural to suit fanciful interpretations. Here may be the suitable place to notice Drummond's reference of this whole parable, "to the period subsequent to Christ's personal ministry, that is to the preaching of the gospel to both Jew and Gentile, from the day of Pentecost down to the day of the restitution of all things." He grounds this view on the fact, that it was "after he died that he specially received the character of Bridegroom. It was only by his death that he paid the price for his bride, the church, and it was also only by this that the marriage of the King's son could be contemplated." I cannot but think that a view is here taken of its being a marriage or wedding feast, not contemplated in the parable. This greatest and most joyous of feasts was selected, to give emphasis to the criminality of those who made light of the invitation to partake of it, it being in ancient, as well as in modern times, an acknowledged usage, that business engagements were not to interfere with an attendance upon such occasions. It must be admitted, however, that the consequences or results of the rejection of Christ by the Jews; symbolized in this parable, extend on from the destruction of Jerusalem to the end of time. But this is true also of the preceding parable of the wicked husbandmen. They slew the son and heir, Jesus was crucified. The vineyard was let out to others, and the wicked men were miserably destroyed, that is, Jerusalem was razed to the ground, and God's vineyard of covenant blessings and privileges was given to the Gentiles, to be by them possessed, until their fullness should come, when the Jews were again to be gathered in. That the same periods of time are designated in both parables, is evident from a comparison

things *are* ready : come unto the marriage.

5 But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise :

6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew *them*.

7 But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth : and he

of the main features, which bear a striking resemblance to one another. There is the same rejection of rightful authority in both, the same abuse of proffered mercies, and the same terrible doom denounced upon the rebellious and contumacious servants. What is represented by *letting out the vineyard to others*, in the first parable, is represented in the second in a more expanded form, by the gathering in of guests to the marriage feast, from the highway. It will be seen, therefore, that under varied imagery, the same great events in God's economy of grace are referred to, beginning with the offers of mercy through his messengers, and ending with the death of his Son, to be followed by the excision of those who rejected him, and the letting out of the vineyard to others, or to use the language of the second parable, the calling in of other guests from the highways. The second parable runs on, however, to the time of final award, when all who are of the class of the guest, not having on the wedding garment, will be expelled from the presence of their lord and from the feast.

*Tell them which are bidden*, &c. The King condescended to expostulate with these wicked and ungrateful men (see Isa. 1 : 18), informing them of the expensive provisions which he had made for the feast, and that every thing was in a state of readiness, so that no time was to be lost in their attendance. *My dinner*. The word in the original first signified *breakfast*, and afterwards the meal taken at noonday. In process of time it came to denote the principal or chief meal, and was often used as here, of a feast or banquet. *My oxen* ; literally, *bullocks*. *Fattlings*, i. e. smaller animals, such as sheep, calves, and the like, which had been fattened for this special purpose. *Are killed—are ready* ; literally, *my oxen and fattlings killed, and all things ready*. The omis-

sion of the verb imparts to the invitation the idea of extreme haste. Every thing was in readiness to be served up on the table. The preparations were so far advanced, as to admit of no delay.

5. *They made light of it, and went their ways* ; literally, *having no care* (for the invitation) *they went away*. They received the message with indifference. They bestowed no thought upon it. How aptly does this represent the careless reception of the gospel message, by the great majority of its hearers. *One to his farm* (i. e. farming business), *another to his merchandise* (i. e. his commercial pursuits). These words represent the two great branches of business, which engage the attention of men.

6. *And the remnant*, i. e. the rest of these men, who seem to have been more malignant, and having nothing else to do, manifested their contempt of the king by abusing and murdering his servants. This refers to the ill-treatment of God's prophets by the Jewish nation. See N. on 21 : 35.

7. *Heard thereof*, i. e. of their wicked conduct. *Sent forth his armies* or troops. This as Doddridge remarks, is said by way of anticipation, as their punishment was doubtless deferred until after the feast, which was now ready to be served up. As a matter of historical verity, however, the Gentiles were not fully inducted into the inheritance and privileges of the Jews, until after the destruction of Jerusalem, but the offers of the gospel were made to them many years previous. It is worthy of note that the expression, *his armies*, of the parable, finds its reality in the Roman armies, which beleaguered and destroyed Jerusalem. Wicked men are often chosen as the instrument of God's judgment, and as such are *his agents*. See Isa. 10 : 5 ; 13 : 5 ; Jer. 25 : 9. *Destroyed those murderers, &c.* This was verified in the destruction of Jeru-



sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not <sup>d</sup> worthy.

9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye

c Da. 9 : 26; Lu. 19 : 27. d Ch. 10 : 11, 13;  
Ac. 13 : 46.

salem, and the other Jewish cities by Vespasian and Titus. *Their city.* "No longer *his*, but *their* city," Alford. So in Matt. 23 : 38, "*your* house is left unto you desolate." Perhaps, however, nothing farther is meant, than that the king extended his invitation to the chief men of the surrounding cities, in one of which dwelt these wicked men.

8. *Wedding*, i. e. wedding feast. *Were not worthy* of the high honor and privilege offered them. *Highways*; literally, *the passing through of the ways*, i. e. where the ways pass through or across each other, and the greatest number of persons might be seen passing along. Trench remarks, that "we must not permit the English expression, '*highways*,' to make us think of places in the country as contradistinguished from the town, whither the servants were sent; the image throughout the parable is of a city, in which the rich and great, and noble, those who naturally would be selected for the king's guests, refuse to come to his banquet, whereupon the poor of the same city are brought in to share it." The expression is evidently intended to represent the gathering of a promiscuous multitude of persons, rich and poor, high and low, which is strikingly illustrative of the offer of salvation made to men of all classes of society, and in all parts of the world. *As many as ye shall find.* The invitation was to be extended to all, without regard to their condition or circumstances.

10. *And gathered together.* They invited all they saw, and having gathered

shall find, bid to the marriage.

10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there

e Ch. 13 : 38, 47.

them in a company, conducted them to the feast. This represents the accessions made from time to time to the Christian church. It is a comprehensive statement of the great end and aim of the Christian ministry, and all who are co-laborers with them in the work of saving souls. It is to gather men in from the streets and lanes of the city, the highways and hedges (see Luke 14 : 21-23), if needs be, to the feast of fat things (see 25 : 6) provided in the gospel of Christ. *Both bad and good.* The gospel invitation is to all. Many ostensibly accept it, who are found at last not to have on the wedding garment. This is the explanation given these terms by some expositors. But it is preferable to regard it, as designating the character of the men when first invited. Some were of such uprightness of external deportment, as to be regarded good in the estimation of their fellow-men. So we speak of *moral* and *immoral* men, not intending thereby, that the former, equally with the latter class, do not stand in need of the cleansing blood of Christ, to wash away their sin, and render them acceptable in the sight of God. *Was furnished.* All the places at the table were occupied with guests.

11. Here commences the second division of the parable, which is an advance on the one previously narrated by Luke 14 : 16-24. The rejection by some and the acceptance by others, of the gospel message, is brought to view in the preceding portion; now the inquisition into the character of those who partake of the marriage

a man <sup>f</sup> which had not on a wedding garment :

<sup>f</sup>2 Co. 5 : 3 ; Ep. 4 : 24 ; Col. 3 : 10, 12 ; Re. 3 : 4, & 16 : 15, & 19 : 8.

feast, and the dreadful doom of unworthy guests, are symbolically set forth. *And when the king came in.* This refers to his public entry into the reception room or hall, as was usual when such great men made feasts. He passed along among the guests, as they reclined at the table (see N. on 9 : 10), receiving their congratulations and inquiring after their welfare. It hardly need be said, that reference is had in this portion of the parable, to the inspection and awards of the final judgment. *A man.* As a single guest only is represented as not having on the wedding garment, some have thought this to have been a warning especially addressed to Judas. But not to say that the parable is to be taken in its widest scope and application, as illustrative of the gospel feast in all time, there is an universality given to the warning, an assurance that the costume of not a single guest will be overlooked, which brings the subject home to every bosom, and cuts off all hope of escaping the searching glance, which will be directed, at the king's entrance, to every guest. It is not implied that only one out of many will be found in this sad predicament, any more than from the parable of the ten virgins, that just one half of the visible church on earth, will consist of those who are destitute of grace in their hearts. In both these instances, a *class* of persons is represented, leaving it wholly undetermined, how small or great a proportion of the whole number is comprised in the class. *Wedding garment.* It has been a matter of doubt, whether this dress was provided by the guests each one for himself, or whether it was furnished by the king. There can be no doubt that the latter is the correct opinion, for it must be remembered, that these guests were invited and brought in from the very highways, along which they were passing for

12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hith-

pleasure or business, and it is very unreasonable to suppose, that they were, or could be provided, at so short a notice, with appropriate dresses. Many of them were doubtless too poor to meet the expense of such a garment, had time been given them to procure one. On the other hand, we have abundant evidence, that kings were provided with extensive wardrobes, from which each invited guest was furnished with a suitable garment, in which he was expected to array himself, before he came into the royal presence, or incur the displeasure of his sovereign. Compare Gen. 46 : 22 ; 2 Kings 10 : 22 ; Esth. 6 : 8 ; 8 : 15 ; Rev. 3 : 5. Instances of the same custom are found in profane writings. See Xen. Cyr. viii. 3. § 1 ; Hom. Il. xxiv. 226, 227. This man had therefore being guilty of great disrespect to his king, in having neglected to clothe himself in the robe thus gratuitously furnished him, setting at nought the rules of the entertainment, by appearing in his own common and soiled dress. So the true guests of the gospel feast throw aside their personal righteousnesses, "which are as filthy rags" (Isa. 64 : 6), and are clad in the robe of Christ's righteousness (for to this most unquestionably the wedding garment symbolically refers), furnished them without money and without price. If this be wanting, nothing will be accepted as its substitute. It is worthy of remark, that this man's condemnation resulted from his own wilful neglect of a provision made for his wants, as much as for that of any one of the other guests. Salvation is provided in the gospel for all. If any are lost, it will be through their own voluntary rejection of its blessings.

12. *Friend.* See N. on 20 : 13. *How camest thou in hither, &c.* The king was willing to hear his reasons, if he had any, for such improper conduct. If no

er, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* <sup>9</sup> into outer darkness; there shall

g Ch. 8: 12.

robe had been provided or offered him, so humane and just a sovereign would by no means have held him guilty. *He was speechless*; literally, *was muzzled*, i. e. put to silence as effectually, as though the gag had been applied. He had no excuse, and therefore, when thus called to account, was struck dumb. In like manner, every mouth will be stopped (Rom. 3: 19), when arraigned before the law of God for impenitence and unbelief. Drummond well remarks, that "the sinner who is destitute of Christ's righteousness at last, will not be rendered *speechless*, by the unspeakable terror of manifested power and glory, but by the unutterable inward horror, that he has sinned away his own mercies. It is not the pressure of irresistible power, which will consume him with misery, but the fearful dawning of such light within him, revealing truth despised and love slighted, which will make him speechless in his wretchedness."

14. *Servants*. A different word from that translated servants in the previous verses. These were a higher class of servants, giving personal attendance upon the guests at the royal feasts, and standing ready to execute the behests of their lord. In the interpretation of the parable, we are to refer them to the angels, who are the executioners, so to speak, of the Judge, at the great day of final account. See 13: 41, 49. *Bind him hand and foot*; literally, *having bound his feet and hands*, as one against whose escape more than ordinary precaution is to be observed. In such cases the hands were bound together by the wrists, or sometimes behind the back, and the feet also with shackles around the ankles. *Take him away* from the banquet-hall. *Outer darkness*. This is thought to refer to

be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

14 <sup>h</sup> For many are called, but few are chosen.

15 ¶ <sup>i</sup> Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in *his* talk.

h Ch. 20: 16. i Ma. 12: 13; Lu. 20: 20.

the darkness without the palace, which, compared with the brilliant light of the banquet within, was dense and dismal. See N. on 8: 12. But may we not here refer it to the dungeon, to which one who had so deeply affronted his king was conveyed? Such an idea comports better with the fact that he was previously bound, which shows that a more severe punishment was inflicted upon him, than mere banishment from the light and splendor of the feast. In whichever sense it be taken it furnishes a striking illustration of the utter exclusion from heaven, of all whose characters are not approved at the great day of final account. *There shall be, &c.* See N. on 8: 12.

14. *For many are called, &c.* This proverbial saying, which refers back to those who first rejected the invitation to the feast, as well as to the expulsion of the guest who had not on the wedding garment, has here a slight difference of application from that which it has in 20: 16, where it seems to refer to the grades of dignity, to which Christ appoints his followers. Here the scope of the parable gives it the sense: Many are invited to the blessings and privileges of the gospel feast, but comparatively few are real participants of the grace of God. This was true of the Jewish nation, in respect to whom this parable had primary application. The people in general were obdurate and unbelieving, while a few only listened to the inspired prophets. Such also is the sad fact in respect to every nation, even those most highly favored with the light of pure Christianity. The masses go down in impenitence to the grave, and comparatively few are found in the way that leadeth to life (7: 13, 14).

15-22. INSIDIOUS QUESTION OF THE PHARISEES, RESPECTING TRIBUTE TO

16 And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither

carest thou for any *man*: for thou regardest not the person of men.

17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to

CÆSAR. *Jerusalem.* Fourth day of the Week. Mark 12 : 13-17 ; Luke 20 : 20-26.

15, 16. *Then went the Pharisees, &c.* They had become so enraged at the parables and teachings of Jesus, that they went forth to devise measures to rid themselves of him by putting him to death. *Took counsel*, i. e. held a consultation. *How they might entangle, &c.* The fear of the people restrained them from open violence, and they were obliged, therefore, to resort to their old practice of endeavoring to ensnare him by proposing knotty questions, and subtle distinctions of the moral and ceremonial law. But they had met with so little success in questions of this sort, that they now determine on pressing him with some inquiry, the reply to which may involve him in political difficulties, and furnish occasion for accusing him to the Romans. *Entangle him*; literally, *ensnare him*, the word being used of taking birds in a snare. It very aptly denotes the wily and desperate efforts of those wicked men, to entangle him by difficult and perplexing questions. *In his talk.* The word *his* is not in the original, and obscures the sense, since it was by their own talk or conversation with him, that they sought to ensnare him. *They* (i. e. the Pharisees) *sent out* (from the place of secret conclave) *their disciples with the Herodians.* These latter were a political party who had espoused the cause of the Romans, and were staunch supporters of their authority. They were now associated with their bitter enemies, the Pharisees, thinking, perhaps, that Jesus would be less on his guard, seeing this union of parties so opposite, made apparently for the purpose of having some point of dispute settled between them. These Herodians would also be very keen to discover any disposition of our Savior

to cast off the Roman yoke. *Their disciples.* They attempted to conceal their design by sending some of their scholars or followers, who pretended to be sincere inquirers after truth. They little thought that they were dealing with one, who needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man (John 2 : 25). *Master.* See N. on 19 : 16. *We know, &c.* This was no exaggerated language when applied to Christ, but in their mouths it was hypocritically uttered for the purpose of throwing him off his guard, in replying to friends so apparently sincere and zealous for the truth. *True.* Truthful, upright. *Way of God, i. e. doctrines and precepts which God approves.* *In truth.* In accordance with truth. *For any man, i. e. for the applause or censure of any one.* *For thou regardest, &c.* They compliment the Savior, for not shaping his instructions and reproofs to suit the external condition of men, regardless of their real character. This stands as a reason, why he regarded not the applause or censure of men. *Person of men* is here put for their external appearance or condition.

17. *Tell us therefore.* Such being your sincerity and truthfulness, answer this question which we are about to propose. *What thinkest thou?* What is your opinion? This formal introduction was designed to draw from him a direct reply, which should leave no doubt as to his sentiments on the subject of their inquiry. *Is it lawful, &c.* This question was so conceived and shaped, that a reply either affirmative or negative would involve our Lord in trouble. Had he replied in the affirmative, the people, smarting under the Roman yoke, would have regarded him as an enemy to his own countrymen. On the other hand, a negative reply would have furnished ground of accusing him before Pilate, as a Galilean,



give tribute unto Cesar, or not ?

18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites ?

19 Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.

who was teaching seditious doctrines. Thus either answer would have effected his ruin. In order to obtain a plain *yes* or *no* to their question, Mark represents them as repeating it in a more simple form, "shall we give or shall we not give?" There seemed to be no way left of evading the question, or shunning the snare, which they had so artfully laid for him. *Tribute.* This was the poll-tax levied upon Judea as a conquered province, to be paid to the Roman emperor. Besides this, there was the tax for the support of the kings, ethnarchs, tetrarchs, and other provincial rulers, and also the tax for the temple service (17 : 24). These heavy taxes, made still more burdensome by the extortion and rapacity of tax-gatherers, reduced the people to despair, and eventually caused them, after many partial insurrections, to take up arms against their oppressors, which resulted in the destruction of their city and temple, and the downfall of the nation. *Cesar.* This was the general title of the Roman emperors, as successors of Julius Cesar. The emperor, in the time of our Lord's ministry, was Tiberius Cesar.

18. *Perceived their wickedness.* The word here translated *wickedness*, is more definitely expressed in Mark by *hypocrisy*, and in Luke by *craftiness*. Matthew, however, gives definiteness to it by the term *hypocrites*, which the Savior applied to them. He thus showed them, that he well understood their true character and motives in proposing the question. *Why tempt ye me?* Why do you strive to bring me into difficulty by your captious questions? *To tempt*, to ascertain my views with evil intent.

20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription ?

21 They say unto him, Cesar's. Then saith he unto them, 'Render therefore unto Cesar the things

Æ Ch. 17 : 25 ; Ro. 13 : 7.

19. *Tribute money ;* literally, *the current money of the tribute*, i. e. the coin in which it was paid. This was the Roman *denarius*, on the value of which see N. on 18 : 28.

20. *Image and superscription.* The image of the reigning emperor, with his name and title, was stamped upon the coin. The circulation of this imperial coin, as current money, was a sign of the subjection of the Jews to his regal authority, and as this coin was found in their possession, it furnished evidence, on the spot, of their hypocrisy in proposing this question to him.

21. *They say unto him Cesar's.* He would have them convicted by their own mouth. *Render* (literally, *give or pay back*), *unto Cesar*, &c. That this was Cesar's coin, was evident from the image and superscription enstamped upon it. It was, therefore, to be given up to him, whenever he required it. This was plain and undeniable, and established the principle, that every thing which belonged to Cesar was to be rendered up to him at his command. This being admitted, it followed as an inevitable consequence, that every thing which belonged to God, was in like manner to be rendered to him. What a flood of light does this answer pour upon the duty of submitting to the established government, and how inseparably does it bind together our civil and religious duties. It is worthy of remark, that this is the only instance in which our Lord refers to the Roman jurisdiction over his countrymen, and this reference he only made, when driven thereto by a direct and pressing question. The yoke of Cesar was galling and oppressive. As a Jew, he doubtless felt a deep sympathy in the

which are Cesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

22 When they had heard *these words*, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

23 ¶ 'The same day came to him the Sadducees, <sup>m</sup> which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him,

24 Saying, Master, <sup>n</sup> Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife,

*l* Ma. 12 : 18 ; *Lu.* 20 : 27.

wrongs of his countrymen. But his mission was not to preach rebellion against the Romans, or a redress of civil wrongs. He came to preach deliverance to the captive, but it was the captive of sin and death. He aimed to make the heart of man better, to teach the duty of love to God and our fellow-men, knowing well that if the gospel was cordially embraced, the great social and political evils would in due time be removed.

22. *They marvelled.* The reply was so brief, comprehensive, and convincing, that the Herodians, in whose favor the question had been virtually decided, were astonished as well as the Pharisees. Luke (20 : 26) says, "they held their peace." They could make no reply, so clearly had their motives been detected and their plans frustrated. *Went their way.* They returned to the chief priests and scribes, by whom they had been sent.

23-33. INSIDIOUS QUESTION OF THE SADDUCEES ON THE RESURRECTION. *Jerusalem.* Fourth day of the Week. Mark 12 : 18-27 ; Luke 20 : 27-40.

23. Our Lord's enemies seem on this day to have made the most desperate efforts, to find some occasion against him, by proposing difficult questions for him to answer. The Pharisees and Herodians had just left him, baffled and ashamed at their total failure. The Sadducees now approach him with similar intent, and press in the form of a question, an objection to the doctrine

and raise up seed unto his brother.

25 Now there were with us seven brethren : and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and having no issue, left his wife unto his brother :

26 Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh.

27 And last of all the woman died also.

28 Therefore, in the resurrec-

*m* Ac. 23 : 8. *n* De. 25 : 5.

of a resurrection and of a future state. For an account of the Sadducees, see N. on 3 : 7.

24. *Master.* See N. on 19 : 16. The design of these Sadducees seems to have been less malicious than that of the previous questioners, their principal object being to puzzle and confound him, by what they regarded as an unanswerable objection to the doctrine of the resurrection. *Moses said.* Compare Deut. 25 : 25. The sense of the passage is quoted, and not the very words. The Sadducees believed in the Pentateuch and in the Prophets, but rejected all traditions. *Raise up seed.* The firstborn son from this marriage with the widow of a deceased brother, was to succeed to his name and estate, and was to be regarded in all the civil relations of life as his son. This was to prevent the extinction of any family of the tribe or nation.

25. *Now there were, &c.* They now proceed to state a case, in which this law of Moses was applicable. It was a singular one, but yet not at all improbable. It is not necessary, however, to regard it as an actual fact, but one supposed for the sake of illustration.

26. *Likewise the second, &c.* As the second brother died childless, the law required that the third brother should marry the widow.

28. *Therefore in the resurrection.* The Sadducees here admit the truth of the resurrection, for the sake of argument. *Whose wife, &c.* Their error

tion, whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err,<sup>p</sup> not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.

*p* Jn. 20 : 9.

lay in the gross material views which they had of the spiritual world, or they would never have gravely advanced so frivolous an objection against the doctrine of the resurrection and a future state. Perhaps, like some modern cavillers, they did not see how God could raise the dead, whose bodies had mouldered away to dust, which had entered, perhaps, into the organic existence of other bodies. They evidently limited the divine power, as appears from what our Lord said, in v. 29. This, with their mistaken views of the Scriptures, led them to believe that the soul and the body died together, and that there was no resurrection.

29. *Ye do err*; literally, *have wandered* from the truth. *Not knowing the Scriptures*. This was the cause of their erroneous views. They were ignorant of the true spiritual sense of the Scriptures, supposing them to teach that the future state was a continuation of the present, with the same physical laws, passions, and conditions. In this they greatly erred. For while the Old Testament is less clear and explicit on this great subject than the New Testament, yet ample evidence is even there furnished of its truth and nature. The passage quoted by our Lord, in reply to their question, is but one of many texts in the Old Testament, which bring out the doctrine of the soul's immortality, and the nature of its existence beyond the grave. Compare 2 Sam. 12 : 23 ; Ps. 17 : 15 ; Isa. 26 : 19 ; Dan. 12 : 2. *The power of God*. The question has been asked ever since the days of Paul, by many who restrict the power of God, or measure it by man's limited faculties, "how are the dead raised up?" The objections advanced by these opponents of the doctrine, are numerous and multiform, but when ana-

30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but<sup>q</sup> are as the angels of God in heaven.

31 But, as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not

*q* 1 Jn. 3 : 2.

lyzed, are all found to result from "not knowing the power of God." He who weighs the dust of the earth in a balance, and whose omniscient eye surveys all things, can easily gather up the dust of those who sleep in Jesus, to become spiritual bodies, bearing the image of the heavenly (see 1 Cor. 15 : 35-54).

30. *In the resurrection*. In the future life, commencing at the general resurrection (see Mark 12 : 25). In Luke, the idea is expanded: "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead," reference being had especially to the condition of the righteous beyond the grave. *Marry* refers to the male contracting marriage; *are given in marriage*, to the female. The Jewish Rabbins differed on this question of marriage in heaven; some affirming, others denying it. They generally believed that the body would be reunited to the soul, and that its office and functions would be similar to what they were in this world. This latter view contained the error which our Lord here refutes. Some took the opposite extreme, and denied that those who were raised would have any bodies. There were some, however, who had correct views of the subject. *As the angels of God*. Luke says, *equal to the angels*, i. e. similar in the circumstances of their being, and in their freedom from earthly passions and relations, but not equal in intelligence and power. It is not affirmed that the glorified saints will be like the angels, as composed of spirit only, but simply in the spiritual laws of their being. It is clear from 1 Cor. 15 : 35-44, that the body is to be raised and reunited with the soul, and thus to exist for ever. We are to notice here that our Lord indirectly asserts the existence of an-

read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,

32 *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the*

*r* Ex. 3 : 6, 16 ; Ma. 12 : 26 ; Lu. 20 : 37 ; Ac. 7 : 32 ; He. 11 : 16.

gels, which the Sadducees denied. *In heaven.* These words refer to the angels, but may be in sense attached also to the risen saints, who will also have their fixed abode in heaven.

31. *As touching*, i. e. concerning, having reference to. *The resurrection of the dead* (see N. on 8 : 20). In Luke 20 : 35 ; Acts 4 : 2, "resurrection *from the dead*," with no difference in meaning. Having exposed their erroneous views of the nature of spiritual beings, our Lord proceeds to prove from the Pentateuch, the portion of the Old Testament held in particular repute by the Sadducees, the doctrine of the resurrection, and the continued existence of the soul after its departure from the body at death. *Have ye not read? See N. on 19 : 4. Which was spoken unto you.* The words of this quotation are addressed to all the readers of God's Word, although primarily spoken to Moses.

32. *I am the God.* Not *I was* the God, as would have been the form of words, had these patriarchs ceased to exist at the hour of death. God is not the God of that which has no existence, and hence the passage proves most incontestably the existence of the soul after death. The resurrection, in its restricted sense to that of the body at the day of judgment, is not here directly asserted. But the existence of the soul after its departure from the body, is a cardinal truth, which lies at the basis of the final resurrection, and which was denied by the Sadducees. The significancy of the expression, *God of Abraham, &c.* may be found in the fact, that with these patriarchs God entered into covenant, to be their God, and they and their descendants, to be his people. See Gen. 17 : 1-14, 22 : 15-18 ; 26 : 24 ; 28 : 13-15 ; 35 :

God of the dead, but of the living.

33 And when the multitude heard *this*, they were astonished at his doctrine.

s Ch. 7 : 28.

10-15. Hence we do not find this form of words used of their posterity, because these were included in the covenant made with Abraham and renewed with Isaac and Jacob. *Of the dead*, i. e. of those utterly extinct or annihilated. *But of the living.* The patriarchs here mentioned, were living in God's presence, although they had long departed this life. He was their God, the author of their continued existence and enjoyments, as he was when they lived on earth. What was true of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is true of all men. This is shown by the words added in Luke, "for all live unto him," i. e. all men as well as the holy patriarchs (see Acts 17 : 28). Olshausen, however, refers *all* in Luke, not to the mass of men, but only to the spiritual seed of Abraham. But *unto* does not seem to refer here to the spiritual union of believers with God, so that his life is theirs, but to the essence of immortality shared by all men, good and bad, from their being made after God's image, both in holiness from which they fell (Gen. 3 : 1-19), and in the immortality of their being, which sin itself has not been able to destroy. How simple and unanswerable is the argument of our Lord. The Sadducees were silenced. Their flimsy objections were all dispersed to the wind. They dared not press him any further with their vain questions (Luke 20 : 40). They went away confounded and put to shame in the eyes of the multitude, who had listened to their question and its reply (see v. 33). Luke (20 : 39) says, that "certain of the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said." They were Pharisees, who were less bitter in their opposition to Jesus than others of their class, and hearing the doctrine of a future state and the



34 ¶ 'But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

35 Then one of them, *which was*

† Ma. 12 : 28.

‡ Lu. 10 : 25.

resurrection so ably proved, they could not withhold their applause (see vs. 15 : 22).

34. *But when the Pharisees, &c.* These malignant enemies of our Lord, again united to embarrass him, and find some ground of accusation against him. They seem in their secret assemblage (see v. 15) to have found no way to get rid of him, and now, hearing of his triumphant refutation of the Sadducees, they came together both to exult over them, and to make further efforts to ensnare Jesus. It is not necessary to suppose that the Pharisees had dispersed after our Lord's reply to the Sadducees, and now reassembled, but that they grouped together more closely, to hold private conference respecting Jesus. They were joined doubtless by some who had not been present when he silenced the Sadducees, but were drawn to the scene by the report of the transaction.

35. *A lawyer.* In Mark, "one of the scribes." He was, as Alford says, one of the Mosaic jurists, whose special province was the interpretation of the law. *Tempting him.* This must here be taken, in a good sense, of making trial of our Lord's knowledge of the Scriptures, since the account given of this lawyer in Mark (12 : 28), shows that he was a sincere inquirer after truth. But within hearing were these deadly enemies of Jesus, the Pharisees, and the question may have been suggested by them, and thus have been in reality one, the design of which was to ensnare Jesus. The scribe might thus have been their agent, without being aware of their wicked plans and purposes.

36. *Which is the great* (i. e. the greatest) *commandment, &c.* The Pharisees divided the commandments into great and small, giving the preference to the ceremonial laws. But it would seem

"a lawyer, asked *him a question*, tempting him, and saying,

36 Master, *which is the great commandment in the law?*

37 Jesus said unto him, "Thou

⊘ De. 6 : 5, & 10 : 12, & 30 : 6; Lu. 10 : 27.

that this question had reference to a still nicer point, as to which of the commandments was greatest of all. This is shown by the answer in v. 38, as well as from the parallel passage in Mark 12 : 28. I cannot therefore agree with Alford, in thinking the question to be this: *which* (what kind of) *commandment is great in the law?* The words *in the law*, are not to be limited here to the ten commandments, but include the whole Mosaic code, moral and ceremonial.

37. *Thou shalt love, &c.* This is quoted from Deut. 6 : 5, the preceding verse being also quoted in Mark. It was one of the passages written on their phylacteries (see 23 : 5), and hence could give no offence in being declared, as it really was, the greatest of God's commandments, involving the spirit of all the rest. It is the first duty of all God's intelligent creatures, to love him supremely. Where this love is wanting there is no genuine obedience. *With all thy heart, &c.* It is not the design to make a metaphysical distinction between these faculties of the mind, but to give emphasis by grouping them together. A full and complete dedication of ourselves is to be made to him. We are to give him our heart the seat of our affections, and our soul with all its powers. In like manner, our mind or understanding, is to be subordinate to his will. All our mental and physical faculties are to be consecrated to Him. Mark adds "with all thy strength," which accords in sense with the original, but the words, "with all thy mind," are added by both him and Matthew. The general sense is not impaired thereby.

38. *This is the first and greatest, &c.* It contains the great principle, which underlies all the other commandments of the decalogue. Hence it is *first* in

shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second *is* like unto it, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

40 <sup>z</sup> On these two command-

<sup>y</sup> Le. 19: 18; ch. 19: 19; Ma. 12: 31; Lu. 10: 27; Ro. 13: 9; Ga. 5: 14; Ja. 2: 8.

importance, and *great*, because if thus kept, all the rest which are but specifications of it, will be duly observed.

39. *And the second* in importance—*Is like unto it* in spirit, for love to God implies love to man. Yet as the object of love, in the latter case, is so infinitely below that of the former, it is to be regarded of secondary rank. *Thou shalt love*, &c. See N. on 19: 19.

40. *On these two commandments*, &c. The first contains the essence of the first table of the decalogue, embracing our duties to God, the second, the essence of the table, in which are laid down our duties to man. *Hang*, i. e. are dependant upon, as great rules and principles of action. *The law and the prophets* (see N. on 5: 17). The spirit and intent of the Scriptures, is to promote love to God and man (see Rom. 13: 10). Upon these as great central truths they depend. Every precept and rule of action, embodies the great idea, that first of all God is to be loved, and that the principle of love is also to regulate our conduct towards our fellow-men. On the phrase *the law and the prophets*, see N. on 5: 17. Mark adds to this account of Matthew, that the scribe acknowledged the correctness of the reply, adding that these commands were in importance far above the ceremonial law relating to burnt offerings and sacrifices, which the Pharisees regarded of such binding obligation. His reply was approved by Jesus, and he was declared to be not far from the kingdom of God, that is, he was far more likely to accept the gospel of the kingdom, than though he

ments hang all the law and the prophets.

41 ¶ <sup>a</sup> While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, *The son of David.*

43 He saith unto them, How

<sup>z</sup> Ch. 7: 12; 1 Ti. 1: 5. <sup>a</sup> Ma. 12: 35; Lu. 20: 41.

had entertained erroneous views of the nature, extent, and obligation of the divine law. Mark also adds, “no man after that durst ask him any question.” He had shown himself so conversant with the Scriptures, and so able to expose sophistical arguments and captious objections to the truth, that no one dared propose to him any more of these ensnaring questions.

41, 42. The Pharisees now gathered around him in great numbers (see N. on v. 34), to watch his movements and note down any word or transaction, which would furnish a ground of accusation. Jesus now in turn proposed to them a question, respecting the apparent incongruity of the relations, which the Messiah sustained to David as his son and Lord. *What think ye of Christ? What is your opinion of his person, nature, and dignity? Whose son is he?* This question was proposed to draw from them the open reply that he was David’s son. This they could answer, but to the following question they could make no reply.

43. *How then doth David*, &c. The point of this inquiry has reference to the twofold, and apparently irreconcilable relations, which the Messiah held to David as his *Son* and *Lord*. If he was to be a temporal king, according to the belief of the Pharisees, however extensive his sway and illimitable his power, according to the ideas of those times, he could not be the Lord of his ancestor, David. As his son he must even be regarded as his inferior. No temporal greatness could change this relation to one of superiority. Hence

then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,

44 <sup>b</sup> The LORD said unto my

<sup>b</sup> Ps. 110:1; Ac. 2:34; 1 Co. 15:25; He. 1:13, & 10:12, 13.

this question confounded the Pharisees, and could only be answered by those who understood the Scriptures as teaching, that the Messiah was to have a *divine* as well as a *human* nature, and that his kingdom was to be a spiritual and not a temporal one. In Christ's human nature, he was David's son; in his divine nature, he was his Lord. *In spirit*, i. e. inspired of the Spirit. See Mark 12:36; also 2 Pet. 1:21, compared with 1 Pet. 1:11. This shows that our Savior regarded the writings of the Old Testament, as inspired of God. *Call him Lord*. This was a term applied only by an inferior to a superior. How then did David, a powerful and independent monarch, who acknowledged no one but God as his Lord and Master, address a descendant of his by this title. Here lay the difficulty, which the Pharisees by their silence confessed their inability to remove. It appears to us strange that with this declaration of David before them, the wise men of the Jewish nation did not attain to juster views of the nature and dignity of the Messiah. But they were blinded by prejudices, arising from their ambitious views and desires for the temporal prosperity of the country, and from a misinterpretation of those passages, in which the Messiah is figuratively spoken of as a king, conquering his foes, ruling triumphantly over his enemies, and sitting upon the throne of his father David. This caused them to lose sight of those passages, in which he was represented as possessing meekness and lowliness of mind, as being despised and rejected of men, having no comeliness or beauty that any should desire him, as being bruised for human iniquity, passages utterly inconsistent with the idea, that he was to be a temporal king and conqueror.

44. *The Lord said, &c.* This quotation is from Ps. 110:1, and is in the exact words of the original. *The Lord* is here the translation of the Hebrew

Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?

word JEHOVAH. *Unto my Lord*, i. e. the Messiah. The language is David's, and *my Lord* means, therefore, *David's Lord*. *Sit thou, &c.* The right hand was the seat of honor and exaltation. No one took this seat but the heir of the throne, or one raised to a participation in the regal power and dignity. A seat at God's right hand was, therefore, an honor to which no human being, however high his station, could attain. Hence this, as well as David's acknowledgment of inferiority in the words, *my Lord*, indicated clearly that the Messiah was a personage having a divine as well as a human nature. *Until*. This does not limit the time of the Messiah's exaltation. It only declares the fact that the Messiah is to be thus exalted, until the overthrow of his enemies, whenever that may be, for this indefiniteness of time is distinctly marked in the original Greek. After their prostration at his feet, it is not implied in this passage, that the Messiah is to descend from his exalted seat at God's right hand. The very opposite of this idea underlies the whole train of thought, both here and in all the Messianic predictions of the Old and New Testament. The reader has only to turn to Heb. 10:12; Luke 1:33; Ps. 45:6; 145:13; Dan. 2:44; 7:14; Rev. 11:15, to find the most explicit assertions that Christ's exaltation is to be for ever, and that of his kingdom there shall be no end. *Thine enemies*. Including the wicked on earth, the bad angels, and death itself, the last enemy to be destroyed (1 Cor. 15:26). *Thy footstool*; literally, *the footstool of thy feet*. Allusion is here had to the custom of kings putting their feet on the necks of conquered foes, as the sign of their complete subjugation. See Josh. 10:24; 2 Sam. 22:41; Ps. 18:40. As illustrative of Christ's victory over his enemies, see Ps. 2:9; 45:3-5; 1 Cor. 15:25; Rev. 17:14; 19:11-21.

45. *If David then, &c.* Our Lord

45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?

46 <sup>c</sup> And no man was able to answer him a word, <sup>d</sup> neither durst any man, from that day

*c* Lu. 14: 6.

now inquires how this twofold and apparently incongruous relation, which the Messiah sustains to David as his Son and Lord, is to be harmonized. To this question the Pharisees could give no reply. Their views of the Messiah were thus shown to be false, inasmuch as they did not meet the conditions of his twofold nature laid down in the prophetic writings.

46. *And no man was able, &c.* Reference is had to the persons, who had endeavored to ensnare him by questions. No one of them could reply to the question, which he had in turn proposed to them, and so fearful were they of the effect in his favor, which such conversations would have upon the people, that they durst ask him no other question of the kind referred to. They were thus driven to other and more open measures to rid themselves of one, who was rendering himself more and more an object of their deadly hatred.

This chapter is remarkable, as containing the last and most desperate efforts of our Lord's enemies, to lead him to say or do something, which would either expose him to the odium of his countrymen or to the jurisdiction of the Romans. He had just pronounced the parable of the marriage of the king's son, in which he depicted the final rejection and condemnation of the Jewish people, and his enemies felt that unless he could be silenced, he would so impress the common people with his true character and mission, that all their influence would be at an end. They dared not lay violent hands upon him, for the people were already so convinced of his divine mission (21: 46), that they would have risen in his defence. There was no way left but to approach him with subtle, insidious, ensnaring questions, and under pretence of inquiring after truth, to lead

forth, ask him any more questions.

#### CHAPTER XXIII.

THEN spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,

*d* Ma. 12: 34; Lu. 20: 40.

him to drop some word or expression, which they could turn into a ground of accusation against him. Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, sects utterly at variance in other things, were united in the one great object of effecting his destruction. But with what wisdom did he reply to their captious questions. How completely did he refute their vain arguments, and put them to shame. With one simple question respecting the nature and dignity of the Messiah, how did he expose their profound ignorance of the Scriptures, which predicted the coming and glory of that long-expected personage. Baffled and ashamed, these proud men, who claimed to be the authorized expounders of God's Word, were obliged to give up the contest, and resort to other and more violent means against the object of their deep and malignant hatred. It is truly a wondrous and glorious chapter in our Lord's history, which we cannot but read with admiration and love to Him, who for our sake was thus willing to endure such contradiction of sinners (Heb. 12: 3).

#### CHAPTER XXIII.

1. *Then spake Jesus, &c.* There were doubtless many of the scribes and Pharisees present, when our Lord pronounced these terrible woes, but they either feared to interrupt him, or were silent through hope that in the vehemence of his feelings, he would say something which they could turn against him. This discourse against the scribes and Pharisees has three parts; vs. 2-12 describe their character, and admonish against their evil example; vs. 13-33 contain the woes pronounced against them; vs. 34-37, the conclusion and mournful lamentation over Jerusalem. *The multitude.* The common people, who had hailed with



2 Saying, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat :

3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do ; but do not ye after their

*a* Ne. 8 : 4, 8 ; Mal. 2 : 7 ; Ma. 12 : 38 ;  
Lu. 20 : 45.

acclamations his advent into the city, and who had assembled in the temple, in the court of the Israelites, from day to day to listen to his words. *And to his disciples.* This refers more especially to the apostles and other disciples, who had followed him from Galilee.

2. *Sit in Moses' seat ;* literally, *have seated themselves.* They claimed to be the sole expounders of the Mosaic law, and as religious guides and teachers occupied, as it were, his seat. While expounding the law, the Jewish doctors sat, and to this allusion is here made. Some think that by Moses' seat is meant the pulpits, which Ezra caused to be made for the expositors of the law (see Nehem. 8 : 4), and from which the Rabbins, in subsequent times, delivered in a sitting posture their discourses.

3. *All therefore.* This is an inference from what precedes. The scribes were the acknowledged teachers of religion, and expounders of the law. The people were therefore to give heed to their instructions, as the expositors of truth. The word *all*, is to be restricted to such observances as were in accordance with the Mosaic law, and not based on mere tradition. The Pharisees, although very corrupt in their practices, taught much that was right and proper for the people to follow, and were very orthodox on many points of belief. But even if we refer *all* to the whole Pharisaic round of rites and ceremonies, yet no valid objection can be made against the direction, since the observance or non-observance of mere rites involved no moral principle, and our Lord may have designed to guard against inciting the people to cast off all respect for their religious teachers, which would have been an insurrectionary movement. *They bid* in their public teachings. *Observe ;* literally, *watch, keep your eye upon.* When

works : for <sup>b</sup> they say, and do not.

4 'For they bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay *them* on men's shoulders ; but *they themselves* will not move

*b* Ro. 2 : 19, &c. *c* Lu. 11 : 46 ; Ac. 15 : 10 ;  
Ga. 6 : 13.

referring as here to the commands and precepts of the law, it signifies *to do, keep, perform.* Hence *observe and do* are here joined to impart fulness and emphasis. *But do ye not after their works.* Follow not their example. Imitate not their conduct. The reason is given in the next clause, *for they say* (i. e. teach many things rightly) *and do not*, i. e. their teaching and practice are directly at variance.

4. *For they bind, &c.* They impose upon others strict obedience to the minutest forms and observances, thus rendering God's law most burdensome and oppressive. The imagery is taken from heavy burdens, bound together and laid upon beasts and upon men's shoulders, to be borne. Reference is not had to traditionary observances alone, but to the more onerous duties of the Mosaic law, which the Pharisees were ready to impose on others, but very unwilling to do themselves (see Rom. 2 : 21-23). Thus beneath the oppressive weight of traditional ceremonies, added to the most rigorous demands of the Mosaic ritual, the Jewish people were crushed down, as beasts of burden, overloaded by cruel owners. The law, properly explained and applied, would have been far otherwise in its effect, although still burdensome, especially in its ceremonial requirements, as compared with the liberty of the gospel (compare 11 : 28-30). *But they themselves, &c.* They neglected these burdensome forms themselves, and paid little or no regard to the duties, which they so exactly imposed upon others. This is represented by their unwillingness to apply one of their fingers (i. e. to make the slightest effort), to assist in moving the heavy burden, which they had laid upon others.

5. *But all their works, &c.* They

them with one of their fingers.

5 But <sup>d</sup>all their works they do for to be seen of men: <sup>e</sup>they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

*d* Ch. 6: 1, 2, 5, 16. *e* Nu. 15: 38; De. 6: 8, & 22: 12; Pr. 8: 3.

were not altogether neglectful of the rites and ceremonies, which they so unscrupulously heaped upon the common people. But all which they did, was done to make an external show of piety, *to be seen of men* (see N. on 6: 5), and not from any real regard of God's law. The moral precepts were wholly neglected by them. This will appear more fully, in the exposure of their true character made by our Lord in the verses which follow. *They make broad, &c.* The Jews understood such passages as Ex. 13: 9, 16; Deut. 6: 8; 11: 18, in a literal sense. They therefore bound around their left arm and on their forehead strips of parchment, on which were written four passages of Scripture, viz. Ex. 13: 1-10; 11-16; Deut. 5: 4-9; 11: 13-21. These pieces of parchment were rolled up in the form of certain Hebrew letters, and placed in receptacles of leather, and bound upon their forehead and arms by thongs of leather. The Pharisees made these phylacteries or amulets broad, in order that they might be conspicuous, and thus render more prominent the character for sanctity of those who wore them. *Enlarge the borders, &c.* Moses commanded (Num. 15: 38-40), that fringes should be made upon the borders of the outer garment or cloak, together with a blue ribbon, as a memorial of God's statutes. This fringe or border the Pharisees enlarged beyond its usual breadth, as an evidence of their scrupulous regard for even the minor points of God's law. Our Lord refers to these practices, as an illustration of what he had just said, that all their works they did to be seen of men.

6. *And love, i. e.* have a desire for, seek to obtain. *Uppermost rooms at feasts.* A more correct translation

6 <sup>f</sup>And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

*f* Ma. 12: 38, 39; Lu. 11: 43, & 20: 46; 3 Jo. 9.

would be, *chief reclining places at their feasts.* The orientals in ancient times reclined, at their meals, on couches, each one of which accommodated three persons. These couches were three in number, and hence received the name *triclinium*. They were so arranged as to form a square, leaving a vacant place in the centre, and an opening on one side, so that the guests could be conveniently served by the attendants. The middle place on each couch, particularly that at the upper end of the table, was the most honorable, and hence was coveted by the Pharisees. *Chief seats in the synagogues.* In the synagogues, built somewhat after the model of the temple, there was a *court with porches*. In the centre of the court was a chapel, supported by four columns, in which, on an elevation prepared for it, was placed the Book of the Law. The seats here referred to, were those nearest this chapel, although some think that they were seats in front of the desk of the reader, upon which they sat with their back to the desk, and their face turned toward the people.

7. *Greetings in the markets, i. e.* respectful salutations, honorable titles, polite attentions. The markets were places of general resort, and thither the scribes repaired, in order to feed their pride with tokens of public respect. *Rabbi*, a Hebrew word, signifying *a great one*. It was an honorary title given to the Jewish teachers, much like our *doctor, teacher*. Three grades, or degrees of respect, were indicated by its form. *Rab* (the lowest degree), *Master*; *Rabbi, my Master*; *Rabboni, my great, or honored Master*. The last form was of rare use, having been given, it is said, to only

8 <sup>r</sup> But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren.

*g* Ja. 3:1; see 2 Co. 1:24; 1 Pe. 5:3.

seven very eminent persons of the school of Hillel. Jesus was twice addressed by this term, once by Bartimeus (Mark 10: 51), and once by Mary at the sepulchre (John 20: 16). Sometimes the word Rabbi was repeated twice, give emphasis to the appellation.

8. *But be not ye called* (i. e. suffer not yourselves to be called) *Rabbi*. The nature and extent of this prohibition will appear, from the assumption and domination in religious matters of the scribes, against which it was aimed. It was not with them a mere title of literary or theological attainments, as the degree of *Doctor* is with us. They claimed the prerogative of supreme jurisdiction in all religious matters, imposing whatever rites, forms, or ceremonies they pleased, and lording it over the consciences of the common people. It was therefore with them a title of spiritual rank and dignity, which no man had a right to assume. This unlawful stretch and possession of spiritual power, was implied in the word Rabbi in its Jewish use, and hence it was prohibited by our Lord. But this prohibition is neither in form or spirit against our use of Reverend or Doctor, employed for the sake of professional distinction, or as harmless titles of respect. A rigid application of this prohibition to these titles as used by us, if applied to the directions in 5: 39-42, and similar passages, would involve us in such absurdities and impracticable rules of action, as to render the command, inevitably null and void. *For one is your Master*, &c. This shows that the term Rabbi indicated a dominion over the religious belief of men, and hence was not to be assumed by Christ's disciples, as he alone had the power to impose religious forms and duties, and bind the conscience of men to their observance. In many MSS. the word *Christ* is omitted, and a differ-

9 And call no *man* your father upon the earth: <sup>h</sup> for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

10 Neither be ye called mas-

*h* Mal. 1:6.

ent Greek word for *Master* is used, than the one thus translated in v. 10. This reading is adopted by Alford, and is considered by him as revealing the Trinity, the Holy Spirit being the teacher in this verse, God the Father being referred to in the next verse, and Christ our Master, in v. 10.

9. *Call no man*, &c. This and the following injunction against being called *masters*, are a continuation in varied form, of the sentiment of the preceding verse. We are not forbidden the use of the word *father*, as denoting the paternal relation (see 15: 4; Ephes. 6: 1-3), or as a term of respect to aged and venerable men (see Acts 7: 2; 22: 1; 1 John 2: 13, 14). But we are to apply this term to no man, as expressive of his supervisory and paternal authority over matters pertaining to religious faith and duty, which belong only to God our Heavenly Father. In this forbidden sense it was used of the Jewish doctors, and has been, and is now, used of the Romish Pontiff, who is styled and addressed by his followers as the *Holy Father*. In assuming this title, he arrogates to himself the title and prerogative of God. *Upon the earth* is here opposed to the words, *which is in heaven*, in the next clause, the former denoting lowness, weakness, imperfection, the latter, the highest glory and exaltation.

10. *Neither be ye called* (see N. on v. 8) *masters*; literally, *leaders*, *guides*. This word, like Rabbi and Father in the preceding verses, refers to the assumption of religious authority in matters of religious belief, and in the enforcement of the ceremonial law. All these titles are forbidden to Christ's disciples, in the sense in which they were applied to the scribes, but not as titles of respect to our superiors in age, influence, and acquirements. The idea that we are to stand covered in the presence of civil

ters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ.

11 But 'he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

12 <sup>k</sup> And whosoever shall exalt

*i* Ch. 20 : 26, 27. & Job. 22 : 29 ; Pr. 15 : 33, & 29 : 33 ; Lu. 14 : 11, & 18 : 14 ; Ja. 4 : 6 ; 1 Pe. 5 : 5.

rulers, and address them in the plainest language, that we are to bestow upon the aged and honorable no other terms of respect, than upon those who are our juniors and inferiors, that in language all rank and distinction are to be ignored, cannot be deduced from this or any portion of God's Word. Equally preposterous and untenable is the notion, that literary titles and distinctions fall beneath the ban of our Lord's prohibition in this passage.

11, 12. *But he that is greatest, &c.* See N. on 20 : 26. *Servant.* The same word in the original, which is translated *minister* in 20 : 26. *Shall exalt himself*, i. e. shall be ambitious of distinctions, or become haughty and arrogant through vain conceit, assuming to be a leader of his fellow-men. *Shall be abased*, i. e. brought down into the depths of humiliation. This proves true oftentimes in this world, but its complete fulfillment is reserved for the future state. The verb is the same, which in the next clause is rendered *shall humble*. There is a play on the word (see N. on 5 : 19) thus employed in two such opposite significations, which is not unfrequently found in proverbial sentences. *Shall humble himself.* This is the opposite of what is condemned in the preceding clause, and implies an humble estimate of one's own abilities, a meek and lowly mind, a disregard of what the world calls greatness, and a contentment with the lot which Providence has assigned to us. *Shall be exalted.* This is to be taken in a spiritual sense, although we oftentimes see this promise verified in a temporal point of view. This was a favorite sentiment of our Lord and frequently enforced. Doddridge says that it occurs at least ten times in the Evangelists. This shows how much stress

himself shall be abased ; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

13 ¶ But 'wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye

*l* Lu. 11 : 52.

our Savior laid upon humility and lowliness of mind.

13-36. These woes constitute the second division of this discourse against the scribes and Pharisees. The preceding verses were spoken to his disciples, in the hearing of these wicked men, but he now directly addresses them in language, which, for severity of denunciation and a searching exposure of their enormous wickedness, has never been equalled. Considered as spoken by Him who is to be the Judge of the moral universe, and from whose eyes nothing is hid, it is the most solemn and awful address which the mind can conceive. No one with a proper sense of his own shortcomings can read these woes, without fearing lest he himself may be chargeable with something of that Pharisaic spirit, which is here condemned in such strong language by our Savior. It is to be feared that the exposures of the last day will reveal many acts, which in this world seemed to indicate great sanctity, to have been done as a mere cloak to conceal the moral loathsomeness and corruption within.

13. This verse is placed in Dr. Robinson's Harmony after the next verse, which is thus made parallel with Mark 12 : 40 ; and Luke 20 : 47. *Woe unto you.* See N. on 11 : 21. There can be hardly a doubt that the scribes and Pharisees referred to in 22 : 41, were present and directly addressed in the pronouncement of these woes. It was the last discourse which he ever uttered in their presence, and was a concentration of the various reproofs, which on several occasions he had before administered unto them. Olshausen remarks that Matthew seems purposely to have placed this discourse against the Pharisees, in contrast with the Sermon



shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

*m* Ma. 12: 40; Lu. 20: 47; 2 Ti. 3: 6; Tit. 1: 11.

on the Mount, with which in his gospel Jesus commenced his ministry. The beatitudes in that sermon, and the woes in this closing discourse are contrasted, both being presented as an act of the judicial work of Christ. *Scribes and Pharisees*. See N. on 3: 7. *Hypocrites*. See N. on 6: 2. This word is added as explanatory of the character of these persons. *For ye shut up, &c.* This is given as the reason why this woe was pronounced. It will be seen that each woe is thus followed by a casual or explanatory clause. *Shut up*; literally, *close against by locking up*. The scribes and Pharisees claimed to be the true and only interpreters of the Scriptures. By their false teachings, they kept the people in ignorance of the true way of salvation, and substituted vain and cumbrous ceremonial rites for purity of heart and life, and obedience to God. They misinterpreted the prophecies relating to the Messiah, and infused into the mind of the people false views of his official character, and thus were a great obstacle in the way of our Lord's reception by the Jews as the true Messiah. In this way they shut up the kingdom of heaven against men. In Luke 11: 52, they are said to have taken away the key of knowledge, that is, they had locked up the door, and retaining in their possession the key, had left no way by which the people could enter. *Against* (literally *before*) *men*, i. e. in the face of men. *For ye neither, &c.* They were guilty of self-destruction, and also of the ruin of others, and thus their sin was greatly aggravated. *Nor suffer, &c.* By taking from the people the true key of prophecy, the Messiah of the Old Testament was hidden from their view, and an earthly king and conqueror was substituted in his stead. Thus they effectually precluded the nation from becoming partakers of the spiritual

14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! <sup>m</sup>for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: there-

blessings of Christ's kingdom. *That are entering*, i. e. desiring or ready to enter. The minds of the common people were greatly turned towards our Lord, and had they not been overawed and otherwise influenced against him by these priests and rulers, in all human probability the nation as such would have received and acknowledged Jesus, and their ruin been averted.

14. *For ye devour, &c.* Ye take away by fraud and extortion the substance of helpless widows. An illustration of this charge against the Pharisees, is furnished in the priestly device of the Papal church to obtain the property of females, both those who come to the possession of it while young and inexperienced, and those who, left in widowhood, are predisposed to make the sacrifice required of them by their priestly confessors. *Houses* are here put for *goods, property*, a use of the word, common in all languages. *For a pretence*, i. e. the better to deceive them, by concealing under a religious mask, their avaricious purpose. *Make long prayer*; literally, *praying long*. Their prayers were said to be sometimes three hours in length. In this way, they acquired the reputation of great sanctity, and obtained such an ascendancy over the minds of these females, that they were persuaded to commit to them their property for religious uses. There is nothing here condemnatory of long prayers, but only of the purpose for which they were made. In general, however, it may be said that long prayers are to be avoided, especially, by such as lead the devotions of God's people. The mind becomes wearied and distracted, and oftentimes totally lost in wandering thought, under the influence of prayers drawn out to an immoderate length. *Greater damnation*, i. e. more tremendous suffering in the world of despair.

fore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made,

n Ch. 15 : 14; ver. 24.

This is evident from v. 30, where is given the full idea, *damnation in hell*. What an appalling truth, and how terrible the doom of one, who puts on the cloak of religion, to accomplish the more surely and effectually his wicked ends.

15. *Ye compass sea and land*, i. e. make the most incredible efforts. *Sea and land* is here put for the whole earth, and the expression is proverbial, to denote the greatest activity and exertion. The zeal of the Jews for proselytism was so great, that enactments were made against it by the Roman authorities. *Proselyte*. This word literally signifies, *one who has come to or in*, and is here applied to a convert from Paganism to Judaism. These converts were divided into two classes, the circumcised or *righteous proselytes*, and the uncircumcised or *proselytes of the gate*. The former took upon themselves the observance of the whole Mosaic ritual, and were received into the privileges of Jewish citizenship. The proselytes of the gate were worshippers of the one God, but did not take upon themselves the observance of all the ceremonial laws of Moses. They frequented, however, the synagogues in company with the Jews, and offered sacrifices at the temple through the priests. The persons here spoken of by our Lord, were probably the proselytes of righteousness. *Twofold more the child of hell*, i. e. twice as deserving of hell. *Child of hell*, a Hebraism for *worthy of or doomed to hell*. Compare 1 Sam. 20 : 31 ; 2 Sam. 12 : 6, where the phrase *son of death* in the original, is employed in the sense, *shall surely die*, shall be doomed to certain death. The proselytes were many of them so bad, that they were called the *scabs of Israel*. They

ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

16 Woe unto you, "ye blind guides, which say, ° Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall

o Ch. 5 : 33, 34.

brought with them their heathen vices and notions, and in order to display the sincerity of their conversion, outdid the Pharisees in acts of bigotry and superstition.

16. *Blind guides*. See N. on 15 : 14. Our Lord here varies his address from the usual form, "scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," to one expressive of the false teachings and interpretations of Scripture, by which they misled the people. The false and subtle distinctions, which they made in the nature of oaths, is here exposed and condemned. This he had before done (5 : 33-37), under a somewhat different aspect, however, and in a less expanded form. There all swearing was forbidden, on the ground that an oath by any inanimate thing, was of binding force, and the same as though sworn by the name of God; here, by the same reasoning, he teaches these scribes and Pharisees the sanctity and validity of every oath. *Whosoever shall swear, &c.* It appears from this passage, that they considered oaths by the gold of the temple or its sacrifices, of binding obligation, but those made by the temple or altar, of no force. By attaching such superior honor to the votive offerings and sacrifices of the temple worship, they led the people to believe that in no way could they so please God, as in the abundance and richness of gifts dedicated to his service. By the words *gold of the temple*, some commentators understand the golden utensils and adornments of the temple. But it accords better with what follows, respecting the altar and the sacrifices brought to be laid thereon, to refer this term to the money consecrated and set apart for sacred purposes, and which was easily convertible to their private use.

swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

17 *Ye* fools, and blind: for whether is greater, the gold,<sup>p</sup> or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

19 *Ye* fools, and blind: for

<sup>p</sup> Ex. 30 : 29.      <sup>q</sup> Ex. 29 : 37.

*Is a debtor*, i. e. is under obligation to keep his oath.

17. *Ye fools and blind*, i. e. blind and ignorant fools. *For whether is greater, &c.* The form of the question shows what answer the Savior would himself give, viz. that the temple erected to the service of Jehovah, far excelled in dignity any of its votive offerings or ornaments. *That sanctifieth.* A gift consecrated to the temple service, was set apart thereby from a common to a sacred use. In this sense it was sanctified by the temple, and received additional worth and dignity, by being thus regarded holy and sacred.

18, 19. *And, Whosoever sweareth, &c.* These are the words of the Pharisees. *The altar.* This word is here general in sense, although some refer it to the altar for burnt offerings (see N. on v. 35). The article in the original seems to refer it to the particular altar, upon which the sacrifice happened to be laid. So the article with the word rendered *gift*, refers it to the particular gift, which happened to be made at any time. It is generic in its application, and not to be limited to any one altar or gift. *Is guilty*, provided he violates his oath. The word translated *is guilty*, is the same as that rendered in v. 16, *is a debtor*, and as the sense is the same, it should have been translated by the same word in both verses. *The gift or the altar.* It was the altar of consecration which gave the offering additional value to

whether *is* greater, the gift, or <sup>q</sup> the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by <sup>r</sup> him that dwelleth therein.

22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by <sup>s</sup> the throne

<sup>r</sup> 1 Ki. 8 : 13; 2 Ch. 6 : 2; Ps. 26 : 8, & 132 : 14.  
<sup>s</sup> Ch. 5 : 34; Ps. 11 : 4; Ac. 7 : 49.

what it naturally possessed. *That sanctifieth.* See N. on v. 17. Compare also 5 : 34.

20. *Whoso therefore shall swear, &c.* Our Lord now lays down the true nature and obligation of an oath. Whatever it may be sworn by, whether the gift, altar, or temple, it is an oath virtually by God, and as such, if lawful (see N. on 14 : 9), should be kept. Its sacredness did not depend upon the absurd distinctions made by the Pharisees.

21. *Sweareth by it, &c.* Such an oath is in effect sworn by the eternal God, whose presence fills the temple, and to whom it had been solemnly dedicated. The temple had been greatly profaned, yet it was God's house (21 : 12, 13), having been dedicated to his service, and being the place whither the pious Jews resorted to worship, and pray for the appearance of the Consolation of Israel (see Luke 2 : 25, 38). It is noticeable that our Lord does not deign to refer to the gold of the temple, which in the Pharisaic view alone gave sanctity to an oath.

22. *The throne of God.* See 5 : 35; Acts 7 : 49. *By him that sitteth thereon*, i. e. by God himself. Thus step by step our Lord leads us to the great truth, that there is nothing by which an oath can be taken, which as constituting God's works, is not the same as his own great and adorable Name, and that an oath of any sort implies that He is called to witness the truth of what is affirmed.

of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! 'for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and

† Lu. 11 : 42.

At the same time he teaches in 5 : 33-36, that trivial oaths, as some regard them, are not to be made, but that men, unless required in a court of justice (see 26 : 63 ; Jer. 42 : 5 ; Ruth 3 : 13 ; 1 Sam. 14 : 45 ; 20 : 3, 21, &c.), are to content themselves with a simple affirmative or denial, a *yea* or *nay* (see James 5 : 12).

23. *Pay tithe of mint, &c.* In order to show their sanctity and great respect for the Mosaic ritual, they overstrained Levit. 27 : 30, to apply to these smallest and most insignificant of herbs. In regard to paying tithes, the practice was very ancient and prevalent. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek (Gen 14 : 20), and Jacob vowed unto God the tenth of his income (Gen. 28 : 22). The custom is referred to in various parts of the Bible, and Moses gave precepts in respect to it (Deut. 12 : 11-19 ; 14 : 22, 23). The tithes were to be presented at the Tabernacle, as a thank offering, except that on every third year, people might make a festival at their own houses, for the benefit of their servants and the poor (Deut. 14 : 28, 29 ; 26 : 12-15). These were called the *second* tithes, in reference to one previously taken, called therefrom the *first*, which belonged to God as their King, and was assigned to the support of the Levites (Levit. 27 : 30 ; Numb. 18 : 20-24 ; Deut. 14 : 22, 23). When the tithe was of a kind difficult of transportation, by adding thereto a fifth part of its estimated value, it might be commuted with money, and thus the labor and expense of transportation be avoided. *Mint.* A sweet-scented herb, like our garden or spearmint, with which the Jews strewed the floors of their houses and synagogues. It grew in great profusion. *Anise.* An aromatic plant answering to our *dill*. *Cummin.* The

cummin, and "have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

u 1 Sa. 15 : 22 ; Ho. 6 : 6 ; Mi. 6 : 8 ; Ch. 9 : 13, & 12 : 7.

seeds of this plant were of a warm, bitterish taste, like our caraway seeds, and were used by the ancients as a condiment. These plants were of little repute, and so abundant as to be within reach of all. In extending the payment of tithes to things of so little value, the Pharisees made an ostentatious display of their rigid observance of the Mosaic law. *And have omitted, &c.* While they sedulously paid external respect to the most minute precepts of the ceremonial law, in order to draw upon themselves the eyes of the people, all the precepts of God's moral law, aiming to eradicate from the heart, selfishness, injustice, pride, anger, hatred, envy, and the like, they wholly neglected. By *judgment* we are here to understand, the great principles of justice, the rendering to all their just dues, whether as magistrates or private citizens. *Mercy* refers to acts of goodness, generosity, benevolence, and love to man, which is the very essence and spirit of the law (22 : 39). By *faith* may be understood, good faith, fidelity in keeping promises, sincerity of intercourse between man and man. It can hardly be referred here to what is called Christian or evangelical faith. These great duties of the moral law, were grossly and shamefully disregarded by the Jewish scribes and Pharisees. They were unjust, revengeful, oppressive, selfish, hypocritical. They trampled the high and holy requisitions of God's law under their feet, but paid their tithes of mint, anise, and cummin, as though their salvation depended upon the exact observance of these minute externals. *These ought ye, &c.* Our Lord does not here condemn the tithe-payment of these valueless herbs. The law in its minutest details is to be obeyed. If the tithes



24 *Ye* blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! <sup>z</sup>for ye

α Ma. 7:4; Lu. 11:39.

were honestly thought to include these herbs, they were to be paid. But his reproof rests on the neglect of the weightier points of the law, which ought on no consideration to have been left undone.

24. *Ye blind guides.* The pronoun *ye* is here, as in v. 16, added by the translators, and weakens the energy of the expression. The same is true in vs. 17, 19, and 26, where the pronoun is needlessly added. The blindness of these men was manifested in neglecting the great duties of God's law, and paying such scrupulous regard to points of trivial importance. *Strain at.* The translation should be *strain out*, reference being had to the filtering or straining of the wine, into which gnats and other small insects might fall, or even breed, and which on religious scruples (founded upon Levit. 11:20, 23, 41, and 17:10-14), as well as the common principles of cleanliness, would be separated from the liquid by the Jew. The smallest of insects is here opposed to the camel, one of the largest and most ill-shaped animals, and ceremonially unclean. The little gnat, on the mere apprehension that it might be classed with the flying, creeping things which were unclean, was carefully strained out, while the large camel, of whose uncleanness there was no doubt, was swallowed down without hesitation. The expression was proverbial, to denote the great pains taken by some to avoid a trifling irregularity, while the great and fundamental principles of right and wrong, they entirely disregarded. Its application to the Pharisees, who tithed mint, anise, and cummin, and omitted the weightier matters of judgment, mercy, and faith, was obvious and striking. *Swallow*; literally, *gulp down*, as we say, when used as here of solids, *swallow down whole*.

make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

26 *Thou* blind Pharisee, cleanse

25. The Savior now passes to an exposure of their desire to appear to men, under a different character from what they really possess. *Ye make clean*, &c. Ye are careful to cleanse and polish the outside, so that it will appear bright and untarnished to the beholder. *Cup* and *platter* are here put generically for drinking vessels and dishes, on which solid food is served up and eaten. The *platter* was properly a side-dish or plate for sweetmeats and other dainties. The great pains taken by the Pharisees to polish and brighten the outside of these dishes, and their comparative neglect of the inside, is seized upon by our Lord to illustrate their spiritual condition. They had the external appearance of great purity of life and conduct, but at heart were vile, impure, *full of extortion and excess*. Extortion was the ruling passion of the Pharisees, and is here put for the many oppressive practices, by which they enriched themselves at the expense of others. The word rendered *excess*, signifies *incontinence*, *self-indulgence*, and refers to their greediness of gain, ever craving, and never satisfied. Their cup and platter were said to be filled with the fruits of their rapacity and greediness, because their wealth had been acquired by acts of extortion and injustice.

26. *Cleanse first*, &c. The cleansing of the inside of the cup and platter, with which the food came in contact, was far more important than that of the outside. So with the spiritual man. Internal purity was more to be desired than an external show of piety. The heart was first to be cleansed. Then would appear the fruit, in a conscientious regard for the great principles of eternal right, and a restoration of their ill-gotten gains to those, who had been the victims of their rapacity. In this way only could the outside become

first that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! <sup>v</sup>for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward,

*y* Lu. 11 : 44 ; Ac. 23 : 3.

really clean. This is expressed under the duty of alms-giving or deeds of charity and mercy, in the parallel passage, Luke 11 : 41, which should be interpreted in harmony with this direction in Matthew. *That which is within*, i. e. the inside as opposed to the *outside* in the next clause. The words *which is*, are added by the translators, the literal rendering being *the within*.

27. This woe contemplates an advance of wickedness over the preceding one. That was directed against false pretensions to morality, this against hypocrisy in religion, the most odious and abominable of sins. *Whited sepulchres*. See Acts 23 : 3. These tombs were generally excavations of the earth, although sometimes they were cut out of rocks. The entrance was by a descent of several steps, and was closed by a stone door, or slab of stone placed against the mouth of it. Annually, on the 25th day of the month Adar, the Jews painted or whitewashed this stone door, and indeed the whole external portion of the sepulchres, in order that those who came up to the passover might distinguish them, and not defile themselves (Numb. 19 : 16) by approaching too near. The point of our Lord's comparison is not, as some think, that the Pharisees were to be shunned as these tombs and sepulchres, but that as these places were externally clean and white, and in appearance the very opposite of the loathsome contents within, so the Pharisees appeared outwardly pure, but were full of moral corruption within. This is evident from the following verse. *Beautiful*. Great pains was taken to make the external appearance of these tombs beautiful and imposing. This was not

but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness.

28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

29 <sup>z</sup> Woe unto you, scribes and

*z* Lu. 11 : 47.

always done as a mere display of wealth, but as a manifestation of respect for the deceased. There is nothing wrong in giving to the burial-places of the dead, a neat and tasteful appearance. Indeed this springs naturally from a well-grounded conviction, that the precious dust there deposited will be guarded, preserved, and raised at the last day, to be reunited with the soul in inseparable union. In view of this glorious resurrection and reunion with the immortal spirit, the body becomes a most highly cherished deposit in the grave. It is only a rank and besotted infidelity which casts out the bodies of the dead, to moulder away and be forgotten like senseless clods of the earth. *Dead men's bones* ; literally, *bones of dead bodies* or *corpses*. *All uncleanness* refers to the loathsome corruption of dead bodies in the tombs.

28. *Even so ye also*, &c. Here is the point of resemblance. There was an outward appearance of sanctity in the Pharisees, which only served to conceal the moral defilement within. No imagery could better have expressed this, than that which our Lord has here employed. *Righteous*, i. e. strict observers of the Mosaic law. *Hypocrisy*, one of the most glaring and odious sins. In the depth of their depravity, they not only practised wickedness, but sought to conceal it under a mask of pretended goodness and purity. How offensive to God is the sin of hypocrisy, may be seen in Isa. 33 : 14 ; Job. 15 : 34 ; 8 : 13. *And iniquity*. This embraces all the sins and evil doings which have their seat in the heart, and which may be concealed from men by the veil of hypocrisy.

29. *Because ye build*, &c. Our Lord

Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with

*a* Ac. 7 : 51, 52; 1 Th. 2 : 15.

does not censure this manifestation of respect for the martyred prophets, but their inconsistency and hypocrisy in doing this, while their whole conduct showed that they belonged to the class of their murderers. Tombs, as they were anciently constructed, had to be frequently rebuilt or repaired. Especially was this true of the gateways and doors, which were more liable to be out of repair. *And garnish, &c.* In their hypocritical pretensions of respect for the prophets, they took much pains to beautify and decorate their tombs with garlands, flowers, columns, carved doors, and the like. The word *righteous* does not refer to a different class of men than the prophets, but is used in a more general sense, to include other persons. Nor are we here to seek for a distinction between *tombs* and *sepulchres*. There is a sort of parallelism between the two members of the sentence, by which the sentiment of the first is repeated in varied language in the second.

30. *If we had been, &c.* If they did not express this in words, they gave virtual utterance to the sentiment, by the pains they took to adorn their sepulchres, and perpetuate the memory of these righteous men. *Would not have been partakers, &c.* We would not have joined in putting these holy men to death, but would have exerted ourselves to defend them from violence. *Partakers with them in the blood.* So we say *companions in crime, associates in sin*, and the like. *Blood*, by a common figure of speech, is here put for *death*.

31. *Wherefore.* The inferential force of this word is not very clearly seen, unless we supply the words expressed in the parallel passage in Luke 11 :

them in the blood of the prophets.

31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that "ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

32 <sup>b</sup> Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

*b* Ge. 15 : 16; 1 Th. 2 : 16.

48, "truly ye bear witness (i. e. your lives show) that ye allow (i. e. approve) the deeds of your fathers," *wherefore* (by this virtual concurrence in their wicked deeds), *ye are witness to yourselves* (i. e. you know in your conscience, you cannot deny) *that ye are the children.* Some render: *ye be witnesses against yourselves.* This interpretation accords well with the original, but seems less natural. The word *children* here signifies those possessed of the same spirit and temper. In this sense we often employ the word *son*. At the very time our Lord uttered these words, they were plotting his death, although he had given them the most indubitable evidence of his divine mission, in the purity of his life, the heavenly nature of his doctrines, and the stupendous miracles which he had wrought. His appeal to their own consciousness of the murderous spirit which possessed their bosom, ought to have convinced them, that they were listening to the denunciations of no common man, and caused them to pause in their career of wickedness.

32. *Fill ye up then, &c.* The imagery is drawn from a vessel, which, when filled to the brim, overflows. So there is a measure of iniquity, which, when filled to overflowing, brings upon the transgressor, without further delay, the punishment due to his sins. Until this point is reached his doom is deferred, but when the measure is full, the stroke is inflicted, and oftentimes with a severity proportionate to the long-suffering which has been abused. Some expositors think that our Lord uttered this as a prediction: Ye shall fill up the measure of your fathers, and then the long-delayed vengeance will overtake you. But it is better to regard it as a

33 *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?*

34 *Wherefore, behold, I send*

*c* Ch. 3 : 7, & 12 : 34. *d* Ch. 21 : 34, 35;  
Lu. 11 : 49.

kind of ironical concession, an indignant leaving of them to the consequences of their wicked conduct. It is clear from the following verses, that reference is had to the fearful ruin, which was about to come upon the nation. "As the individual man may fill up the measure of forbearance granted him by God, and thus come to destruction, so may a people, viewed as a body, or, as it were, as a larger individual." Olshausen. The phrase, *measure of your fathers*, refers to what remained to be filled of the measure, which their fathers had been filling up. The national sin had been accumulating for centuries, and was now to be increased beyond the limits of God's forbearance, by the deep and aggravated sin of the rejection and crucifixion of his Son, by these wicked scribes and Pharisees. We have a parallel instance of judgment delayed in the history of the Amorites. Abraham's descendants could not take immediate possession of Canaan, because the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full (Gen. 15 : 16). It was not till more than 400 years after the promise, that the Canaanites had reached their culminating point in wickedness, and were in consequence exterminated from the land. So God had been provoked for centuries by his people the Jews, but it was not until they had slain many of his prophets, and last of all the Lord of life and glory, and persecuted his church, that the measure of their iniquity was filled, and their doom no longer stayed.

33. *Ye serpents*; literally, *serpents*. See N. on v. 24. The serpent as the emblem of wisdom, is sometimes used in a good sense (see N. on 12 : 16), but here it has the opposite and more usual signification of low and malignant cunning. *Generation of vipers*. See N. on 3 : 7; 12 : 37. *How can ye escape,*

*unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in*

*e* Ac. 5 : 40, & 7 : 58, 52, & 22 : 19. *f* Ch. 10 :  
17; 2 Co. 11 : 24, 25.

&c. The thing is well nigh impossible. Your heart is so corrupt, and your habits of sin so confirmed, that reformation in you is not to be expected. *Damnation of hell*, i. e. the condemnation and sentence of punishment in hell, to be pronounced by the Judge, at the day of final account. There can be no doubt that it refers to the future punishment of these wicked men in the world of woe. The language is of the most awful import, and spoken by Christ himself the Judge, it has all the certainty and terror of the final sentence itself.

34. *Wherefore*. The train of thought is this: Since you are determined on filling up the measure of national wickedness, and there is no hope of your reformation, therefore I shall continue to send you messengers of grace, by the ill-treatment of whom, you will soon pass beyond the limits of divine forbearance, and bring upon yourselves the judgments so long delayed. *I send* has the force of the future, *I will send*. Christ here distinctly announces his Messianic power and authority. They were planning his death. They were determined to silence that voice, which was pronouncing those terrible woes. But he avers that he shall still be seated on the throne of power, that he will continue to send his messengers, with the same warnings, threatenings, and calls to repentance, until the measure of their iniquity was full, and they were ripe for destruction. *Prophets, &c.* Reference is had in these terms, used of the Jewish doctors and teachers, to the apostles and other Christian teachers. These as the true expounders of God's word, were the only ones to whom these titles properly belonged. The Jewish scribes were impostors, ignorant themselves of the divine law, and leading astray all who



your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city :

35 <sup>9</sup> That upon you may come

g Re. 18 : 24.

submitted themselves to their instruction. I cannot, with Alford, attach to these terms such particularity, as to make *prophets* represent the apostles; *wise men*, Stephen and others like him; and *scribes*, Apollos, Paul (who was all three of these), and such leading ministers of the early church. *Some of them ye shall kill.* This was fulfilled in Stephen (Acts 7 : 59), and James (Acts 12 : 2). *And crucify.* There were doubtless instances of this in the persecutions of the Jewish church, but the history of those times is so brief, that they have not been handed down to us. The Jews never themselves inflicted this kind of punishment, but through the agency of the Romans, as in the case of our Savior, could easily effect it whenever they wished. Paul doubtless would have been thus put to death, had they secured his condemnation before the Roman tribunal (Acts 21 : 36; 22 : 22; 24 : 1-9). Olshausen's view, that our Lord included himself among the number of those whom he was about to send, is therefore unnecessary as well as untenable. *Shall scourge.* See N. on 10 : 17. See also Acts 5 : 40; 22 : 19. *And persecute, &c.* This had a very general fulfillment among the early Jewish Christians. See Acts 8 : 1, 4; 11 : 19.

35. *That upon you, &c.* So dreadful a punishment would follow their wickedness, that it would seem as though God had visited upon them the blood of all his martyred servants, from the commencement of the world down to that time. Our Lord does not mean to teach that they were personally guilty of their fathers' sins (see Ezek. 18 : 20), but that the effect of those sins would be brought out, in the terrible judgments visited upon the nation. Thus the crimes of parents, so far as temporal judgments are concerned, are often visited upon their children. Ignorance and beggary are bequeathed to a

all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, <sup>4</sup> from the blood of righteous Abel, unto <sup>1</sup> the blood

h Ge. 4 : 8; 1 Jo. 3 : 12. i 2 Ch. 24 : 20, 21.

family by an intemperate father. The political condition of a country or community, is affected injuriously by the acts of generations, that have long since passed away. The scribes and Pharisees poured the last drops into the cup, which had been previously filling up with the sins of their ancestors. Upon them fell the national judgments long threatened and long accumulating, just as upon the Canaanites of Joshua's day, was visited the exterminating wrath of God, which had been predicted, so long previous (Gen. 15 : 16), and which every generation of that wicked people had helped to bring upon their descendants, upon whom fell the final blow. *All the righteous blood, i. e.* all the judgments of the slaughter of righteous men. *Righteous Abel,* the first martyr. *Upon the earth, i. e.* the land of Judea. *Zacharias son of Barachias.* This has been referred by some to Zechariah, one of the minor prophets. There is no reliable evidence, however, that he was put to death. The words *son of Barachias* were doubtless added by some transcriber, who took it for granted, that the above-named prophet was referred to (see Zech. 1 : 1). Some have supposed that the person here spoken of, was an individual of that name, put to death and well remembered by the Pharisees, although the incident has not reached us. Others have thought from a tradition referred to by Origen, that Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, is referred to. But neither suppositions are tenable. It is more probable that Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, slain by the order of king Joash (2 Chron. 24 : 20-22), in the court of the house of the Lord, is the martyr spoken of. If Jehoiada, as is thought by some, had also the name Barachias, the words *son of Barachias*, may be considered genuine, although they are omitted by Luke (11 : 51). The Jews had often

of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

κ Lu. 13 : 34.

two names as was the case with Jude, called also Lebbeus and Thaddeus (see N. on 10 : 3), and with Matthew, called also Levi, and Nathaniel who had also the name Bartholemew. Dr. Ebrard thinks that Zechariah was the grandson of Jehoiada, and that an oral tradition preserved the name of the *father* of Zechariah. A reference to 2 Chron. 24 : 15, will show that Jehoiada had already died at the age of 130 years, before the prophetic Spirit descended upon Zechariah, and he was slain. The expression *from Abel to Zechariah*, the first and last martyrs mentioned in the Old Testament, was a proverbial one, including all the martyrs within these extremes. Of similar use was the local expression *from Dan to Beersheba*, to denote the whole land between these extreme northern and southern towns. *Whom ye slew.* The scribes whom our Lord addressed, were said to have done this, as being the representatives of the past wicked generations, both in possessing the same malignant, persecuting character, and in suffering the dreadful judgments, which so long a time had been impending over the nation. *The altar* for burnt offering, which stood in the court of the priests, before the entrance of the edifice itself.

36. *Verily I say, &c.* An emphatic repetition of the previously uttered sentiment, with the express declaration, that the judgments referred to were to fall upon that very generation. Although Jerusalem was not taken by the Romans, until about 40 years after this prediction, yet many whom he addressed, may be supposed to have lived until that event. There were also dreadful and bloody tumults and insurrections against Roman authority, some years before the final catastrophe took

37 <sup>κ</sup> O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, <sup>ι</sup> and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would <sup>μ</sup> I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her

ι2 Ch. 24 : 21. μ De. 32 : 11, 12.

place. It was literally true, therefore, that God's judgments fell upon the men of that generation, according to the prediction of our Lord.

37. In view of this terrible doom, he breaks out into an apostrophe, which for tenderness and pathos has never been equalled. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem.* This city was the seat and centre of wickedness. It possessed great privileges, all of which had been abused. It had slain the prophets, and soon was to put to open shame and crucify the Savior of the world. But now it was on the eve of destruction. The dreadful siege which it was to undergo from the Romans, its attendant horrors and tragical termination, all rose up before the omniscient eye of the compassionate Son of God. Beyond also were the retributions of eternity, which he only could foresee and fully realize. With what pathos, in view of its dreadful doom, did he exclaim, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem." With what divine compassion, did he mourn over its wickedness, and rapidly approaching downfall. *Thou that killest* (literally, *hast been in the habit of killing*) *the prophets.* Here was the seat of the Jewish persecuting power. So frequently had the city been stained with their blood, that it had become a proverb, that no prophet could perish out of Jerusalem (Luke 13 : 33). *And sent unto thee,* as messengers of truth from the Lord. *Would I have gathered,* in order to serve and protect them. *Thy children.* The children of a city, in Oriental language, are its inhabitants. *As a hen gathereth, &c.* An expressive comparison, and full of beauty, tenderness, and love. *And ye would not come to me for protection.* The Jews would not receive Jesus as their Messiah, nor listen to his instruc-

chickens "under *her* wings, and ye would not!

38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye

*n* Ps. 17:8, & 91:4. *o* Ps. 118:26; ch. 21:9.

tions, but rejected and put him to death.

38. *Your house.* Some refer this to the temple, which was soon to be in ruins. But in that case, we should have expected the more usual form, *the house of God*. It is better to refer it to the whole city, the metropolis of the nation. Rome was styled the house or *domicilium* of the republic (compare Cic. in Cat. II.). *Desolate*, i. e. laid waste, in ruins.

39. *Ye shall not see me, &c.* The explanation of this passage is attended with some difficulty. Some think that our Lord declares, that he will not again be seen by them until the destruction of Jerusalem, designated in the next chapter by "the coming of the Lord." But his coming to bring about that awful event, was not hailed, as here predicted, by "blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," or in other words, he was not then received and acknowledged by the nation as their Messiah. Some regard these words as added to give emphasis to the declaration that they should see him no more, the condition being added, of their acknowledgment of him as Messiah, which he knew they would not do. It was, therefore, a virtual declaration, that his presence would be granted them no more. But this does not seem to quite meet the wants of the passage. The sense evidently is, that the Jews, in some future time, would acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah, and that he would then return to receive their homage and praise. No one can doubt that there is to be such a time in the history of this remarkable people. It has not, indeed, yet been reached, save that now and then an individual of the nation has been con-

verted to Christianity. But prophecy discloses to us the great and cheering fact, that the Jewish nation, as such, will eventually acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah. He will then come, not in bodily form, but in Spirit, to sit upon the throne of his father David, and then shall be uttered, in loud hosannas of praise, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." It appears to me, therefore, to be primarily a sentence of rejection of this rebellious nation, but secondarily, a glorious prediction of the final conversion of the Jews, and the acknowledgment of Jesus as their Messiah.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

AND <sup>a</sup> Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and

*a* Ma. 13:1; Lu. 21:5.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

1-42. CHRIST FORETELLS THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM. *Mount of Olives.* Fourth day of the Week. Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-36.

1. *And Jesus went out.* Before he left the temple, he pronounced his eulogy upon the widow who cast her mite into the treasury (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4). At this time also certain Greeks who were proselytes desired to see Jesus, and a voice from heaven was heard, which the people variously interpreted to be thunder, or the voice of an angel (John 12:20-36). He appears soon after to have departed from the temple. As he was going out, his disciples, struck with wonder and astonishment at the splendor and magnificence of the temple, and its vast and massive foundations, called his attention to the structure. They did this partly, that he might participate in the pleasure and wonder which the sight inspired, and partly, to divert his mind from those subjects with which it had been overtaken during the day. *Came*

his disciples came to *him* for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

ὁ 1 Kl. 9: 7; Je. 26: 18; Mi. 3: 12; Lu. 19: 44.

to *him*. A usual form of expression, when his disciples were about to address him on some particular subject. *To show him*, i. e. to call his attention to the subject. *The buildings*, i. e. the surrounding porches and edifices, which belonged to the temple. Mark and Luke speak of the goodly stones and gifts, as objects to which they also directed his attention. According to Josephus, some of these stones were forty-five cubits long, five high, and six broad. These stones doubtless composed the wall built up from the bottom, on three sides of the hill Moriah, and filled in with earth, so as to form an area on which to rear the edifice. Among the costly gifts belonging to the temple, was a golden table given by Pompey, and several golden vines of great size, having clusters, as Josephus says, as tall as a man. The same Jewish historian says, that the marble of the temple was so white, that at a distance it appeared like a mountain of snow, and the gilding, when the sun shone upon it, was so dazzling and beautiful, that it caused those who forced themselves to look upon it to turn away their eyes, as they would have done at the sun's own rays. Tacitus speaks also of the great opulence of the temple at Jerusalem.

2. *See ye not all*, &c. This question served to direct their attention to the prophetic doom, which he was about to pronounce upon the temple and its environs. Mark (13: 2) puts this question in an affirmative form. The sense is the same. *There shall not be left*, &c. This was one of the most definite and literally fulfilled prophecies which was ever spoken. What more unlikely to human foresight, than that this temple, which had stood so many years as the pride of the nation, and it may be added, of the Roman governors who resided at Jerusalem, should be so completely razed to its foundation, as

2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, <sup>b</sup>There shall not

was here predicted. There was at the time of the utterance of this prediction, no sign of so obstinate and sanguinary a war as that which closed with the destruction of the temple. The Jews had borne the yoke of Roman servitude for many years. There were local insurrections, but these were soon and easily quelled. The same state of things seemed likely to continue for years, if not ages to come. But the rapacity and tyrannical oppression of the Roman procurators, drove the people to a rebellion, which, with the suddenness of a tornado, broke upon the land, and ended in the ruin of the nation. The destruction of the temple, too, was one of the least probable events, when all things are taken into consideration, which could have been contemplated. It was the express command of Titus, that this magnificent structure should be saved; and when a Roman soldier, as Josephus says, "hurried on by a certain divine fury," cast a blazing brand through one of the golden windows, and news came to the Roman commander that the temple was on fire, he ran thither with the utmost haste, and by command and gesture exerted himself to stay the conflagration. But it was all in vain. The din and tumult were such that they neither heard his voice nor attended to his signals, and soon the whole building was enveloped in a sheet of fire and fell to ruins, a little more than 639 years after its rebuilding by Haggai. But the prophecy received not only a general but also a particular fulfilment. The walls of the city, and those also of the temple, were ordered by Titus to be demolished, and this was done so thoroughly, says Josephus, "that there was left nothing to make those who had come thither, believe it had ever been inhabited." *One stone upon another*, &c. A proverbial and somewhat hyperbolic expression, although in this instance



be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

literally fulfilled. *That shall not be thrown down*, is added to give emphasis to the previous words, and convey the idea of complete demolition.

3. *And as he sat*, &c. The foregoing prophecy was spoken, as they were leaving the temple. They had now passed out of the city and ascended the Mount of Olives, from which a commanding view was had of the temple and whole city. Here, as our Lord was resting from the labors of the day, now drawing to a close, his disciples (Peter, James, John, and Andrew, according to Mark) came to him privately (i. e. apart from the other disciples), and questioned him more particularly in respect to the strange and startling prediction which he had just before uttered. *Tell us, when shall these things be*, &c. There has been great diversity of views among expositors, as to the intent and scope of this inquiry. In view of its apparently threefold nature, some refer it to three distinct events; 1. The destruction of Jerusalem; 2. The acknowledgment of Jesus' Messiahship, referred to in the close of the preceding chapter (on which see N.); 3. The final advent of Christ to judge the world, which was then to come to an end. But although it is evident, that our Lord in his reply, made a transition from the destruction of Jerusalem, to the scene of the final judgment, which that event so aptly typified, yet one can hardly suppose that the question of the disciples embraced in its scope any thing, save the ruin of the city and temple, which Jesus had just predicted. This catastrophe, if it ever took place, according to the prevalent ideas of the Jews, was to be connected with great physical changes in the constitution and order of things. They supposed that Jerusalem and its temple, under the Messianic dispensation, would be as enduring as time, and whenever these came to an end, there

3 ¶ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying,

c Ma. 13 : 3.

would be a closing up of the present constitution of things, and a new era and economy take place. The question then of these disciples must be regarded as a simple one, proposed in a varied form, as questions often are where a full and explicit answer is demanded. It is substantially this: When shall Jerusalem and its temple be destroyed, as thou hast just now declared, and what signs shall precede thy coming to bring about this catastrophe, and effect the final change in the constitution of things, which may be denominated the end of the world? Thus explained, the question is simple, pertinent, and the very one which might be expected from men, who had just heard with alarm and astonishment, that the city and temple which they thought would stand through time, was to be utterly destroyed.

In answer to their inquiry, our Lord informed them of the signs which should precede the downfall of Jerusalem, and as they had erroneously connected with this event the end of the world, his reply embraces also that catastrophe. But these two events are not, as Alford thinks, referred to in parallel interpretations running through the chapter, as far as v. 28, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the final judgment being enwrapped in the words, the former however, predominating, after which (i. e. from v. 28), the lesser subject beginning to be swallowed up in the greater, until in the latter part of the chapter and the whole of the next, the *second advent*, and at last the ensuing *final judgment*, being the subjects. Instead of such an admixture of the two events, utterly forbidden by the great time-text v. 34, and also by the plain and simple reply, which our Lord must be conceived to have made to the interrogatories of his disciples, the one event must be regarded as the sole subject of the prediction

<sup>d</sup> Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

*d* 1 Th. 5: 1.

until v. 43, where is a distinct and well-marked transition, and following which there is nothing which can well be referred to the destruction of Jerusalem, but every thing points to the final coming of our Lord at the day of judgment. In interpreting this chapter, therefore, we must ever keep in mind the great fact, which is the only key to its true exposition, that our Lord is replying to a simple question, as to the time and premonitory signs of the destruction of Jerusalem, but inasmuch as the disciples had connected these with the end of the world, he passes at v. 43, to the consideration of that event, which is still further developed in the following chapter, especially in vs. 31-46.

Those expositors who find, as has been stated above, three distinct questions proposed by the disciples, maintain that our Lord in his reply employed language which could be applied to them singly or combined, and that he intermingled expressions, some of which referred to the destruction of Jerusalem, and others to the day of final judgment. But this, as has before been intimated, is based on the false assumption, that the disciples regarded the final consummation of things as something distinct from the destruction of Jerusalem, whereas, as we have shown, they, in common with their nation, looked upon the two events as strictly contemporaneous. It also makes their question too general, its only point being the time and signs of the destruction of their city and temple, which their Master had just predicted in the most express terms. Besides this objection to the question being regarded as threefold, such a view compels its supporters to make the answer of our Savior confused and enigmatical to the highest degree. One verse they

4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Take heed that no man deceive you.

5 For <sup>f</sup> many shall come in my

*e* Ep. 5: 6; Col. 2: 3, 18; 2 Th. 2: 3; 1 Jo. 4: 1.  
*f* Je. 14: 14, & 23: 21, 25; ver. 24; Jn. 5: 43.

refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, another to the coming of Christ at the final judgment, and again another, by a kind of double sense, to both events, as their conceptions of the language and imagery may seem to justify. Such a principle of interpretation disregards the general scope of thought, and readily adopts any conjecture which mere verbal imagery and resemblances may suggest. This will be more clearly seen in the exposition of the chapter.

*These things*, i. e. the destruction of the temple as predicted. *Sign of thy coming* to subvert the present order of things, and take vengeance on thy enemies. The unbelief and opposition of the scribes and Pharisees had been such, that the disciples thought one of the first acts of the coming, conquering Messiah, would be to inflict vengeance upon them, and on the ruins of the Jewish polity to establish a new order of things. It is not strange, if with minds only partially enlightened as to the true nature of the Messiah's kingdom, they should have confounded all these events in the question they proposed. *End of the world*. See N. 13: 39.

4. Our Lord does not immediately reply in direct terms to their question. He first speaks of the great number of false teachers and impostors, which should throng the land, corrupting many from the truth, and preparing the nation for its approaching doom. *Take heed*; literally, *see to it, watch earnestly*. A similar form of earnest caution is found in Eph. 5: 6; Col. 2: 8; 2 Thes. 2: 3. *Deceive you* by the various acts and devices, with which impostors seek to mislead the unstable and unwary.

5. *For many shall come*, &c. This is the reason why they were to take special heed against impostors. The

name, saying, I am Christ; <sup>2</sup> and shall deceive many.

6 And ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these*

*g* Ver. 11.

land was to abound with them. Such was the fact. Josephus says that during the procuratorship of Felix, there were numbers, "who deceived and deluded the people under pretence of divine inspiration," instancing an Egyptian false prophet, who got together 30,000 deluded men, and led them to the Mount of Olives, where they were met by the Roman soldiers, and the greater part slain or made prisoners. He also speaks of Theudas (not the one mentioned in Acts 5 : 36, 37, who must have lived nearly 40 years previous), a certain magician, who persuaded many people to follow him to the Jordan, which he promised to divide for their easy passage over it. He and his followers perished miserably, having been unexpectedly fallen upon by a troop of Roman horsemen. Simon Magus, Dositheus, and others might be mentioned, as among the deceivers of that time. *In my name.* Not in the name or authority of Jesus of Nazareth, but claiming the title of Messiah, which belonged to him alone. *I am Christ.* This explains what is meant by their coming in our Lord's name. Luke here adds, "and the time draweth near," which are not the words of Christ, but of these false prophets, who inspired the people with vain hopes, that the time of deliverance from Roman servitude was at hand. *Shall deceive many.* Thousands followed these impostors, expecting to see great signs and wonders, followed by a speedy deliverance from the Roman yoke.

6. *And ye shall hear of wars, &c.* For many years previous to the final war, there were rebellions, outbreaks, and risings of the people against Roman rule, so that the whole land was in a state of commotion, and much blood was shed. Reference is thought by some to be had also to the wars and

*things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

7 For <sup>h</sup> nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines,

*h* 2 Ch. 15: 16; Is. 19: 2; He. 2: 22; Zec. 14: 18.

commotions, which about that time agitated the Roman empire, in which four emperors, in the short space of eighteen months, came to a violent death. It is worthy of note, that when our Lord uttered this prediction, the Roman empire internally was in the enjoyment of profound peace. *Rumors of wars.* The country was kept in agitation and alarm, by reports of wars and invasions which never actually took place. Josephus particularly refers to several of these reported hostilities, as the declaration of war against the Romans by Bardanes, and afterwards by his brother Volagases, both Parthian kings. But special reference is doubtless had to rumors and reports of risings and rebellions in the land of Judea, against Roman domination, and of threats of Roman invasion to punish the refractory Jews, which kept the people in a state of continual agitation and alarm. *Be not troubled,* i. e. have no fears of immediate danger, for these are but signs of what is afterwards to come upon the land. *Must come to pass* according to the divinely constituted arrangement and order of events, by which these wars and rumors of wars are to precede the final catastrophe. *But the end,* i. e. the end of the world referred to in v. 3, and in the disciples' estimation, equivalent to the destruction of the Jewish state. See N. on v. 3.

7. *For nation shall rise, &c.* An expression of the sentiment of the preceding verse. Wars and commotions were to agitate the whole civilized world, and especially the land of Judea. Alford from Josephus and Philo Judæus, refers to the disturbances among the Jews at Alexandria, the massacre of 50,000 Jews at Seleucia, and a similar tumult at Jamnia, a city near Joppa. There is no difference to be sought for

and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places.

in the terms *nation* and *kingdom*, unless perhaps the latter is intended to more specifically refer to countries under kingly rule. The general idea is, that wars and commotions were to convulse the whole world. *Shall rise*, i. e. rouse themselves up to carry on war. The metaphor is based upon the rising up of a man from his seat, when about to do violence to another. *Famines, pestilences*. These evils are often joined together in profane writings, inasmuch as pestilence usually follows upon the footsteps of famine. The Greek words *λιμός*, *famine*, and *λοιμός*, *pestilence*, are nearly alike. The etymological signification of both is a *pinning* or *wasting away*. This prediction of our Lord was fully verified. The famine in the days of Claudius, mentioned in Acts 11 : 28, which by a reference to the historian Josephus, will be seen to have lasted with greater or less severity for many years, under the two procuratorships of Cuspius Fadus, and Tiberius Alexander, was probably but one of many, which raged not only in Judea, but the neighboring country. There were also pestilences, one of which is recorded by Josephus, as having raged in Babylonia, in the reign of Caius Caligula, and another is spoken of by Tacitus, as having visited Italy, A. D. 66. *Earthquakes*. These phenomena were regarded by the ancients, as evidence of the anger of the Deity, and the impending of divine judgments. Some take the word here as metaphorically denoting civil commotions, but the context, in which natural events are spoken of, forbids such an interpretation. In the time here referred to, there were many violent earthquakes. One took place, according to Tacitus, in the reign of Claudius. In Asia Minor during Nero's reign, several cities were destroyed by an earthquake. Pompeii was nearly destroyed by a similar convulsion of nature. *In divers places*. Although this clause belongs grammatically to *earthquakes*, yet it is to be referred in sense also to the pre-

8 All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

ceding evils, *famines* and *pestilences*. All these were widely prevalent in the earth. Luke adds in this connection, "and fearful sights and great signs shall be from heaven." Although there is scarcely any thing, which is to be received with more caution and even distrust, than reports of remarkable sights and appearances seen by individuals, and even by an excited community, yet there is no doubt that many strange and wonderful sights preceded the downfall of Jerusalem. Josephus says that "a star (i. e. meteor) resembling a sword stood over the city, and a comet that continued a whole year." Previous to the final rebellion and war, while the people in crowds were attending the feast of unleavened bread, at the ninth hour of the night, a light shone around the altar and the holy house, as bright as day, and lasting for half an hour. The eastern gate of the temple, which was so heavy, that it was with difficulty shut by 20 men, and had been as usual strongly barred and bolted, was seen to be opened of its own accord, about the sixth hour of the night. A little before sunset, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor, were seen running about among the clouds and surrounding cities. At the feast of Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner temple, to perform their accustomed ministrations, they felt a quaking, after which they heard a great noise, and the sound as of a multitude saying, "let us go hence." A man of the common people, Jesus by name, four years before the war began, when the city was in peace and prosperity, came to the feast of tabernacles, and began on a sudden to utter in a loud voice woes against the city. This he continued to do by day and night, in all the streets and lanes of the city. He was terribly scourged, but at every stroke of the whip, his reply was, "wo, wo to Jerusalem." He continued this melancholy cry for seven years and five months, when during the siege, as he was going round upon the



9 'Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of

i Ch. 10: 17; Ma. 13: 9; Lu. 21: 12; Jn. 15: 20, & 16: 2; Ac. 4: 2, 3, & 7: 59, & 12: 1, &c.; 1 Pe. 4: 16; Re. 2: 10, 13.

wall, he cried in his loudest tones, "wo, wo to the city again, and to the people and to the holy house," and just as he added, "wo, wo to myself also," he was struck by a stone from one of the enemies' engines and killed instantly. No one will charge upon Josephus, that he forged these stories in order to meet the terms of our Lord's prediction. It is doubtful whether he had even read or heard of it, and had it fallen under his eye, such was his Jewish prejudice against the Christians, that he would have been unwilling to do or say any thing, which would advance their cause.

8. *All these, &c.* What a dire destruction, of which wars, famines, pestilences, fearful sights, and great signs from heaven, are but the precursors.

9. *Then shall they deliver, &c.* Our Lord now proceeds from signs in the natural, to those in the moral world. The growing rage and bitterness of persecution, which his followers were to experience from their enemies, was to be regarded as a sign of his coming to execute his judgments upon them. His language is similar to that which he employed, when he sent out the Twelve (10: 17-22), especially in the parallel passages, Mark 13: 9-13; Luke 21: 12-17. The word *then* does not mean time following the preceding events, but has the sense of *during that time*. Hence it does not conflict with Luke 21: 12, "before all these [commotions, calamities, and fearful sights] they shall lay their hand," &c. the beginning of persecution being there referred to, which, waxing more bitter and deadly, reached in time the culminating point, at which Matthew takes it up, and groups it with the fearful and ominous signs of coming wrath, spoken of in vs. 6-8. *To be afflicted*, i. e. to be imprisoned, scourged, and persecuted in various ways. See N. on 10: 17. *Shall kill*

all nations for my name's sake.

10 And then shall many <sup>4</sup>be offended, and shall betray one an-

& Ch. 11: 6. & 13: 57; 2 Ti. 1: 15, & 4: 10, 16.

*you.* Luke: "and some of you shall they cause to be put to death." James, and probably Peter, and Paul, and James the Less, were put to death before the destruction of Jerusalem. Others of the apostles also may have suffered martyrdom before that event. *Ye shall be hated, &c.* See N. on 10: 22. Christianity was aggressive in her movements. Her followers did not content themselves with being permitted to dwell in peace and safety among the heathen around them. They always bore strong and open testimony against popular sins and vices, and strove to make converts to the faith which they professed. Hence <sup>6</sup>they incurred the bitter hatred of heathen rulers, and it was to put a stop to this spirit of extension, and uncompromising hostility to heathenism, that such dreadful persecutions were waged against them. It was a contest for life and death. If Christianity was suffered to go on unchecked in her triumphs, paganism would soon come to an end. Tacitus and other Roman historians, refer to the hatred entertained towards the Christians. See also Acts 18: 22; 1 Pet. 2: 12; 3: 16; 4: 14.

10. *Shall many be offended.* In view of the afflictions and sufferings through which they were called to pass, many would renounce Christ and become apostates from the faith. *Betray one another.* They would not only abjure Christ but become themselves the most bitter and vindictive persecutors of the church. This was fully verified in the early history of Christianity. *Shall hate, &c.* This is an advance on the preceding idea. Betrayal to death might result from fear, or a superstitious devotion to paganism, in which they had been born and educated, but here there is the most intense hatred accompanying the act. Alford refers this to such hatred, as was felt towards

other, and shall hate one another.

11 And <sup>l</sup>many false prophets shall rise, and <sup>m</sup>shall deceive many.

12 And because iniquity shall

<sup>l</sup> Ch. 7: 15; Ac. 20: 29; 2 Pe. 2: 1.  
<sup>m</sup> 1 Ti. 4: 1; ver. 5: 24.

Paul by the Judaizers. The words *one another*, both in this and the preceding clause, show that those who had once professed Christianity are referred to.

11. *Many false prophets shall arise*, &c. Some commentators find a distinction between these false prophets, and the false Christs spoken of in v. 5. But this appears rather to be an emphatic repetition of what is there affirmed.

12. *And because iniquity* (literally, *lawlessness*) *shall abound*. A general prevalence of sin in all its forms, was to mark the period immediately anterior to the downfall of the Jewish persecuting power. The tense of the original would be better preserved in the translation, *because iniquity has become full or immoderate*. It had reached the culminating point, and its effect was felt disastrously even by the church. *The love of many*. Love to God and the interests of Christ's kingdom is here meant. Some, however, take it in the sense of *love to one another*, but this is implied in love to God. *Of many* (literally, *the many*), i. e. the greater number of Christ's followers. *Shall wax cold*. This does not imply open and gross apostasy, but a decrease of spirituality, a coldness and comparative indifference to the claims and duties of religion. This was to result from the prevalence of iniquity or general lawlessness, the paralyzing influence of which would pervade even the church. That religious declensions were prevalent, we may gather from such passages as Gal. 3: 1-4; 2 Tim. 1: 15; Heb. 10: 25; 2 Pet. 2: 1-3; Rev. 2: 4; 3: 1-4, 15-19.

13. *Shall endure*, i. e. shall patiently submit to indignity, persecutions, trials for Christ, without abatement of love or zeal. *Unto the end*. Some refer

abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

13 <sup>n</sup>But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

<sup>n</sup> Ch. 10: 22; Ma. 13: 13; He. 3: 6, 14;  
Re. 2: 10.

this to the destruction of Jerusalem, and attach to the following words, *shall be saved*, the idea of temporal salvation from the ruin, which was at that time to overwhelm the Jews. But while it is a well attested fact, that few, if any, Christians perished in Jerusalem, during its siege and fall, yet in view of the context, these words of our Lord can hardly be referred to a mere temporal deliverance. In the preceding verse, it was predicted that there would be a general declension in religious love and zeal, in consequence of the rampant forms of iniquity, which should every where prevail. In this verse is promised deliverance and salvation to such as persevere to the end. The verses are evidently antithetic, and if the defection in v. 12 is spiritual, the enduring to the end, in this verse, must be interpreted, as a patient continuance in well-doing to the end of life, when complete salvation in heaven will be its reward (see N. on 10: 22). As a parallel passage, see Rev. 2: 10, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." Luke (21: 18) expresses this sentiment in a proverbial form: "But there shall not a hair of your head perish." If this refers to temporal salvation, how is it to be reconciled with what has just been said in v. 16, "some of you shall they cause to be put to death." *The same*; literally, *this same one*, i. e. he and no other.

14. *This gospel of the kingdom*, i. e. relating to the Messianic kingdom. *In all the world*. This is not to be limited to that portion of the world under Roman sway. The expression in Mark (13: 10), "among all nations," gives it a more enlarged signification. It is also an historical fact, that the gospel was preached by the apostles and their fel-

14 And this <sup>o</sup> gospel of the kingdom <sup>p</sup> shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all

<sup>o</sup> Ch. 4 : 23, & 9 : 35. <sup>p</sup> Ro. 10 : 18; Col. 2 : 6, 23.

low laborers throughout the habitable world, before the destruction of Jerusalem. *For a witness, &c.* For a witness or testimony of what? Alford thinks it was done to give God's people, the Jews, who were scattered among all these nations, the opportunity of rejecting or receiving the preaching of Christ. Some expositors say that the gospel was to be preached throughout all lands, as a testimony that salvation through Christ had been rejected by the Jews, while others maintain that the division wall which so long existed between Jews and Gentiles, was now to be broken down by the closing up of the Jewish economy. That the promulgation of the gospel was in some way to be a witness against the Jews, is very evident from the general scope of the passage. But a witness of what event? There can be but one reply. What event or fact of history was comparable with the rejection of Jesus Christ, and his crucifixion by his own countrymen? Would not the whole world, when made acquainted with this great national sin, unite in pronouncing Jerusalem as eminently worthy of destruction? *Then shall the end come.* When all nations were thus furnished, through the gospel, with full evidence of the wickedness of the Jews, in rejecting their Messiah, divine vengeance would no longer be delayed against Jerusalem.

15. Our Lord now proceeds to point out some of the more immediate signs of his coming to destroy Jerusalem, and put an end to the Jewish state and dispensation. Even Olshausen, who blends in such inseparable union the proximate and remote comings of our Lord, admits that vs. 15-21 "contain a very minute representation of the destruction of Jerusalem, without any pause being observed, or any intimation being given, that what follows

nations; and then shall the end come.

15 When ye therefore shall see <sup>q</sup>the abomination of desolation,

<sup>q</sup> Ma. 13 : 14; Lu. 21 : 20.

is to be separated from what has preceded." It is precisely for this reason, viewing the Savior's reply to his disciples as designed to be intelligible, that in this portion of the prediction, I can find no direct reference to the day of judgment, only as the whole event of the coming to destroy Jerusalem, is symbolical of that great and final coming to take vengeance on the ungodly.

*When ye therefore shall see, &c.* This is thought to refer to the first approach of the Roman army under Cestius Gallus (A. D. 66), which harmonizes with the parallel passage in Luke, "when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies." But Alford supposes that Luke, who wrote for the Gentiles, refers to the outward sign, while Matthew and Mark, writing for Jews, or as Jews, have reference to a corresponding *inner* or *domestic* sign, seen within the very precincts of the temple itself. This he refers to the internal desecration of the holy place by the Zealots, which coincided with the approach of Cestius, and thus the Christians from within and without were warned to escape. But I cannot but think that sole reference is had in the prediction to the idolatrous ensigns of the Romans, which were first arrayed against Jerusalem, when it was "compassed with armies," and afterwards, when the city was taken, set up as the object of worship, over against the eastern gate of the temple. See Joseph. Beil. Jud. VI. 6. § 1. *Abomination of desolation*, i. e. the abomination which causeth desolation. This is too strong a term to be applied to any thing short of the Roman army, on its mission to ravage and desolate Jerusalem (see Luke 21 : 20). In order to appreciate fully the appositeness of this expression, we must remember that in front of the Roman legions were borne their ensigns, con-

spoken of by \* Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (\* whose readeth, let him understand,)

r Da. 9 : 27, & 12 : 11.

sisting of eagles and images of the emperor, to which divine honors were often paid by the army. No greater abomination could meet the eye of a Jew, than ensigns to which such idolatrous worship was paid. *Spoken of by Daniel the prophet.* See Dan. 9 : 27 ; 12 : 11. These words of Daniel were regarded by the Alexandrian Jews, as referring to Antiochus Epiphanes. Compare 1 Macc. 1 : 54. If this be so, we have our Lord's express declaration of their second fulfillment in this last and most dreadful siege of the city. Indeed, the impiety, cruelty, and desecration of holy places and things by Antiochus, was but a type of the more dreadful sufferings and profanation of sacred places, which were to attend the siege and capture of the city by the Romans. *Stand in the holy place.* These words, in their strictest application, must be referred to the erection and worship of the Roman ensigns in the temple, as above mentioned. This is evident from the parallel passage in Mark 13 : 14, "standing where it ought not." But the commencement of this abominable desecration of holy ground, to which Christians were to give heed, as a signal for them to retire from the city, was when the ensigns first appeared at the head of the legions approaching to invest the city. *Whoso readeth, &c.* This with the parallel passage in Mark is added by the respective Evangelists, to call the special attention of Jewish Christians to the warning here given, in order that they might make timely flight from the city. Some of the older commentators refer the words to our Lord, who, as they think, wished to fix the attention of his hearers to the remarkable prediction of Daniel. But then we should have expected the word *heareth* instead of *readeth*.

16. *Which be in Judea*, i. e. in Jerusalem and the places contiguous. That  
VOL. I.—14.

16 Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains :

17 Let him which is on the

s Da. 9 : 23, 25.

Jerusalem is included is seen from the parallel passage in Luke: "And let them which are in the midst of it (i. e. Jerusalem the capital and centre of Jewish power) depart out." *Flee to the mountains*, where were strongholds, caverns, and other places of concealment and safety. Many of the Jewish Christians, in obedience to this command of our Savior, at the siege, fled to Pella, a town forming the northern boundary of Perea (see Joseph. Jewish Wars, III. 3, § 3), and thus preserved their lives. On their way thither they had to pass over mountains, and it is not improbable, that many of them fled still further north to Mount Libanus itself. It was a very remarkable fact, that when the Romans, under Cestius Gallus, first marched against the city, and taking advantage of the consternation caused by his unexpected and sudden approach, was on the point of obtaining possession of it, he recalled his soldiers from the place, and retired from the city, as Josephus says, "without any reason in the world." But this unexpected raising of the siege, furnished the Christians opportunity to leave it as their Lord had directed. The final siege was also thereby reserved for Titus, to be marked with great tribulation, "such as was not since the beginning of the world to that time, nor ever should be."

17. *On the housetop.* The roofs of the oriental houses were made flat, so that persons could sit or walk there for recreation and retirement (Acts 10 : 9). From the porch inside the gate, stairs led to the roof or upper stories. A person could therefore, descend from the roof, without entering the interior of the house. *Not come down to take, &c.* This command was expressive of the greatest haste. The danger was too near to admit of any delay. No time was to be lost in fleeing to a place



housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house :

18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

of safety. It was of more importance to save their lives, than to load themselves down with valuables from the house, and thus retard their flight. Some think that the command is not to descend at all, but to make their way with all speed over the roofs of the contiguous houses, and thus reach the wall of the city. This gives a good sense, but yet it is better to refer the prohibition to a descent through the interior of the house, in order to select and carry away their most valuable effects. This also is more consonant with the direction as given in Mark (13 : 15).

18. *Neither let him which is in the field, &c.* This and the preceding verse were doubtless proverbial expressions, denoting great haste. Like most of such phrases and forms of speech, they slightly partake of the hyperbolic. We are not to suppose that they were to leave so suddenly, as to make no provision for the wants of themselves or families. But the prohibition was against unnecessary delay, and the removal of such things as would not only be comparatively useless, but retard their flight. *In the field* pursuing his usual labor. *Return back, &c.* While at work the outer garment (see N. on 5 : 40) was laid aside, as is usual with laborers at the present time. At the first sign of danger, the field laborer was to flee for life, not returning even a few paces to the place where he had laid down his garment, lest the enemy might fall upon him while taking it up, or his flight be thereby retarded.

19. Reference in this verse is had primarily to Christian females, who, in the condition here referred to, could not well be removed to a place of safety. The eye of our Savior may have

19 And 'wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days !

20 But pray ye that your flight

† Lu. 23 : 29.

also been directed to the miserable condition of Jewish mothers, who, in the extremity of the siege, killed and ate their own offspring.

20. *But pray ye, &c.* Our Lord here directs his followers to pray for the mitigation of calamities, which were predicted as certainly to come. Their occurrence was, however, no more certain in the divine mind and purpose, than the time and order in which they were to take place. But this time and order had been arranged with reference to the very prayers, which our Savior here directed to be offered. These supplications had all been contemplated by the omniscient God, from the ages of eternity, and had as permanent a position and influence in the divine plan, as the events in reference to which they were offered. The efficacy of prayer with a Being, who has all things arranged and fixed according to his eternal purpose, may have in it much that we cannot fully understand. But that prayer has this efficacy, there can be no doubt, and we have our Savior's example and direction to pray earnestly for the removal of temporal, as well as spiritual evil. *In the winter.* The Jewish winter extended from the middle of December to the middle of February. At this time the mountains, whither these fugitives were to direct their flight, were covered with snow, and the cold too, was very intense. The days were short, the roads bad, and the travelling tedious and dangerous, particularly through the declivities of mountains. See Jer. 13 : 16 ; 23 : 12. *Neither on the sabbath day.* The Jewish Christians might entertain scruples against travelling on the sabbath beyond the legal distance, which was about five furlongs. But even if free from such scruples, they would be

be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day :

21 For "then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since

*u* Da. 9:26, & 12:1; Joel 2:2.

liable to detention on the roads, should they attempt to travel contrary to Jewish law.

21. *For there shall be, &c.* This verse contains the reason for the foregoing directions. Unless they succeeded in escaping from the city, they would share in tribulation such as the world had never witnessed. *Great tribulation.* Compare Luke 21:23, 24. In this expression are included all the excesses, horrors, and carnage which attended the siege and fall of the city. *Such as was not, &c.* Hardly can this be deemed hyperbolic, when the reality of those dreadful atrocities and horrors of the siege of Jerusalem are taken into account, and which, as Bloomfield remarks, have never to this day been paralleled. This form of expression is found in Ex. 10:14; 11:6; Dan. 12:1; Joel 2:2. *No, nor ever shall be.* The negation in the original is exceedingly emphatic, and forbids attributing to our Lord in this passage, the language of exaggeration.

22. *Those days* of the siege of Jerusalem. *Should be shortened;* literally, *had been shortened.* The duration of the siege and all its attendant calamities, had been fixed in the eternal counsels of God. Unless in his mercy he had predetermined that the city should be taken in a much shorter time, than its strong position and defences would have led any one to suppose, the whole nation would have become extinct. This shortening of the siege was brought to pass by several concurring circumstances. Had Jerusalem contained within its walls its own citizens only, and been defended with military skill, such was its almost impregnable position and strong defences that, if taken at all, it would only have fallen after several years had been consumed in the siege. But the city was crowded with people, who had come up to keep the

the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh

passover, and not only were more provisions required to sustain so great a multitude, but the stores, which they had on hand, were recklessly destroyed or wasted in the first days of the siege. Josephus (*Jewish Wars*, V. 2 § 4) says, that John and Simon, who headed different factions, set fire to houses full of corn and provisions, which would have been sufficient for a siege of many years. As Titus had so invested the place, that no provisions could be brought in from the surrounding region, famine soon made the most dreadful ravages, and together with internal seditions, by which thousands were butchered in the city, caused it to fall in the short space of four months. When Titus invested the upper city, which was so steep as to forbid its being taken without raising banks against it, the Jews of their own accord abandoned the town, which Josephus says "could never have been taken by force, nor indeed in any other way than by famine." So infatuated was their course, that the same historian considers them "ejected from these towers by God himself." All these things were a part of God's determination to shorten these days "for the elect's sake." *No flesh should be saved;* literally, *there could not be saved all flesh,* i. e. no flesh, or not one man could be saved. Had the siege been prolonged, and the Roman armies tarried any length of time in Palestine, all the inhabitants would have perished. *The elect's sake.* This, without doubt, refers to Christians, not only those then living in Palestine, but such as in future were to be gathered in from the Jews (Rom. 11:15), and which promise depended upon their continued existence as a nation. We are not to suppose that all the Christians in Jerusalem and Judea made good their escape (v. 16). Many of the sick, aged, infirm, and

be saved: <sup>z</sup> but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

23 <sup>y</sup> Then if any man shall say

∞ Is. 65 : 8, 9; Zec. 14 : 2, 3.      y Ma. 13 : 21;  
Lu. 17 : 23, & 21 : 8.

poor, must of necessity have remained behind. Some would also stay, whose zeal and courage would not permit them to fly, or who were desirous of preaching the gospel to their countrymen, in this time of their extremity. These would all have perished had the siege been prolonged. They also who had fled to the mountains, unless relieved from the necessity of a long concealment, would have perished for want of the necessaries of life. But God did not overlook his people. They were to be instruments in spreading the gospel, and were not given up to utter destruction. Olshausen, overlooking, or not giving due weight to these considerations, finds a very imperfect fulfilment of this passage in the fall of Jerusalem, and thinks "it has its final reference to the advent of the Lord."

23. *Then*, i. e. during these days of calamity. Those expositors, who find a twofold reference pervading this whole prophecy, consider this and the following verses to point with increasing distinctness to the day of final judgment, and less palpably to the destruction of Jerusalem. But a true and consistent exposition demands that we refer the whole prediction, as far as v. 43, to the latter event, which is indeed to be regarded as a striking symbol of our Lord's final appearance to take vengeance on his enemies. We must take care not to be led away from the true scope and intent of our Lord's reply to the disciples, as to the time and premonitory signs of the destruction of the city and temple, by undue regard to the language, which has so often been used in prayers and religious exercises, of the final judgment, that we have come, almost as a matter of course, to refer it primarily to that great day. *Any man*, however worthy

unto you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or there; believe *it* not.

24 For <sup>z</sup> there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and won-

z De. 13 : 1; ver. 5 : 11; 2 Th. 2 : 9, 10, 11;  
Re. 13 : 13.

of belief he may appear to be. *Lo here is Christ*; literally, *behold here the Messiah*. While uttering these words, the speaker may be supposed to have pointed out, by some gesture, the individual referred to. It was a generally believed opinion, that the Messiah would appear in the season of their extremity, and hence the people lent a credulous ear to these deceivers. In a time of such public distress, the disciples themselves, unless particularly on their guard, might be carried away by the claims of some one of these impostors, through hope that he would free their country of its oppressors.

24. *For there shall arise, &c.* This is added to show the necessity of great watchfulness against these impostors. Men would arise whose pretensions to the Messiahship would be supported by wonderful deeds and manifestations. Many would become their followers. "Behold here the Messiah," would be the language of multitudes. In such a time of public excitement and anxiety to find deliverance from the Romans, the elect themselves would be strongly tempted to become their followers. *False Christs and false prophets.* Most commentators distinguish between these classes, the former referring to those who pretended to be the Messiah, the latter, to those who claimed the prophetic gift, and were full of lying predictions, in respect to the result of the siege, and final deliverance of the Jews from the Roman yoke. *Great signs and wonders.* These were not real but pretended miracles. In 2 Thess. 2 : 9-12, a reference is had to just such lying wonders, which should mark a subsequent age in the church, when the man of sin and son of perdition was to be revealed (2 Thess. 2 : 3). No impostor ever had power to work a real miracle,

ders; insomuch that, <sup>a</sup> if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

25 Behold, I have told you before.

26 Wherefore if they shall say

*a* Jn. 6 : 37, & 10 : 28, 29; Ro. 8 : 28, 29, 30;  
2 Ti. 2 : 19.

or to predict a future event, unless compelled thereto by a higher power, and contrary to his own expectation (see N. on 7 : 22). There are various ways in which crafty and expert men may deceive others. They may be able even to counterfeit miracles, with such adroitness, as to almost shun the possibility of being detected, except by their corrupt lives and teachings. There were many such persons in the time here referred to. Josephus calls them impostors, magicians, sorcerers. *If it were possible*; literally, *if possible*. Great difficulty, and not absolute impossibility, is here implied. It is a truth beyond dispute, that through divine grace the elect will be kept from apostasy, yet there is nothing in the nature of the case, to forbid the supposition, that they may sometimes be deceived in respect to the true character of those who assume to be religious teachers. A ripe Christian, who is wise in things pertaining to truth and righteousness, is, however, quick to detect signs of imposition and hypocrisy.

25, 26. *Behold I have told you before.* I have now forewarned you against these impostors. *Wherefore*, i. e. in view of the warning now given you. *They shall say.* This refers to such persons as professed to have found the Messiah. *He is in the desert.* The pronoun *he*, is here put for the Messiah, it being used in the way of affected privacy; *he* (you know whom, the coming One, the Messiah) *is in the desert.* According to Josephus, these impostors generally made their first public appearance in deserts and retired places, where they could gather a band of deluded followers, without being molested by the civil authorities. *Go not forth*, even to examine into his pretensions,

unto you, Behold, he is in the desert: go not forth: Behold, *he is* in the secret chambers; believe *it* not.

27 <sup>b</sup>For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even

*b* Lu. 17 : 24.

much less to become his followers. Unless in cases where it becomes an obvious duty to keep others from being led astray, by making ourselves personally acquainted with the deceptive arts and practices of impostors, we are clearly taught from this passage, not to countenance even by our presence, such deceivers as are to be found in every age, and which abound under various names and pretensions at the present time. *Go not forth* to them, is the command of our Lord to all his followers in every age and country. *In the secret chambers.* As the desert was a convenient place for fomenting rebellions and gathering followers, so the privacy of the chamber was often used for the same purpose. The expression *secret chambers* (see N. on 6 : 6), is employed here of private apartments in general. *Believe it not*; literally, *believe not*. Put no faith at all in the assertion. This is an emphatic repetition of the same direction in v. 23.

27. *For as the lightning, &c.* The tram of thought is this: Look not to such retired places, as the desert or the secret chamber, for the Messiah, for not stealthily and tardily, but sudden and conspicuous, as the lightning flashing over the whole heaven from east to west, shall be the appearance of the Son of man, the true and only Messiah. This advent is primarily the one to take vengeance upon the Jewish nation, but may secondarily and in a higher sense be referred to his final coming to judge the world. But we are not to adopt such a jargon of hermeneutics, as to make this coming of Christ refer *primarily* to both these events, or to consider with Alford, that both these comings are enwrapped in the words. To adopt such a principle of interpre-



unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

28 <sup>c</sup> For wheresoever the car-

*c* Job. 39 : 30; Lu. 17 : 37.

tation, would soon lead to the attaching as many senses to the words of a passage, as one's fancy might dictate, and destroy all reliance upon language, as a medium of fixed and definite thought. Olshausen is here more consistent, and, dropping the twofold sense which he has attached to much of the prediction, says that these words have no sense except when applied to the coming of the Lord in the clouds of heaven. But see N. on v. 34.

28. *For wheresoever the carcass is, &c.* This verse refers evidently to the Romans, gathered together for the destruction of Jerusalem, as eagles gather around the dead carcass upon which they are about to prey. The expression is proverbial, and denotes that where sin and crime abound, God's judgments will be sure to follow. The Jewish nation was soon to fill up the measure of their iniquity (23 : 32). The day of God's vengeance would then speedily come. This verse therefore asserts the ripeness of the nation for ruin, and the certainty of its approach, and is confirmatory of what was said in the preceding verse, about the sudden and open appearance of the Son of man to execute vengeance upon the Jews. As eagles rarely if ever feed upon dead carcasses, the bird here referred to must be a species of vulture, which scents and approaches dead bodies from a great distance. This bird is often referred to by the ancients under the general term eagle. *The eagles.* On the use of the article, see N. on 8 : 20.

29. *Immediately after, &c.* It is not to be denied that many interpreters of great piety and learning, refer these words to the final coming of Christ, from the strong and peculiar language in which his appearance in the clouds of heaven, attended by his holy angels, is described, and which bears a close resemblance to the description of his great and final advent, in other portions

of God's Word (see 25 : 31, 32; 2 Thess. 1: 7). The objection advanced against this view from the word *immediately*, which word seems to overlook the centuries, if not ages, which will probably intervene between the downfall of Jerusalem and the day of final judgment, is not entitled to much weight, for it may be taken in the general sense, *very soon after*, referring to the comparative brevity of these intervening centuries or ages, when viewed in relation to the ages of eternity, which are to follow the day of judgment, and in reference to which all time is but as a moment's duration; or, as Alford remarks, the ultimate fulfilment of the prophecy, the treading down of Jerusalem by the Gentiles, which process is still going on, and which constitutes the fulness of these days of tribulation, may extend so far, that when the cup of Gentile iniquity is full, *immediately after* shall the coming of the Lord himself happen. But while there can be no objection to this interpretation from the word *immediately*, there are, nevertheless, strong reasons, on other grounds, to doubt its truth and correctness. If we adopt this view, we must suppose our Lord to have replied to the simple question of his disciples, in a very confused and perplexing manner. Verses 32-34 are most unquestionably to be referred to the destruction of Jerusalem. Why should vs. 29-31 be interposed, if referable to a more distant and august event? The transition to this final coming, if here made, was so sudden and imperceptible, that it must have escaped the notice of the disciples, and been referred by them to the coming to destroy Jerusalem. Especially would this be their understanding of his words, when almost in the same breath he said (v. 34), "this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." The similarity of language to that employed in reference to his coming at the day of judg-

29 <sup>d</sup> Immediately after the

*d* Da. 7 : 11, 12.

tribulation of those days, ' shall the sun be darkened, and the

<sup>e</sup> Is. 13 : 10 ; Ez. 32 : 7 ; Joel 2 : 10, 31, & 3 : 15 ; Am. 5 : 20, & 8 : 9 ; Ma. 13 : 24 ; Lu. 21 : 25 ; Ac. 2 : 20 ; Re. 6 : 12.

ment, is found in the fact, that the destruction of Jerusalem was a great type or symbol of the day of general doom, and the language of the one may with little variation be applied to the other. The word translated *immediately*, corresponds to the more general expression in Mark, "in those days." There is no valid objection to this reference of the passage to our Lord's first coming, drawn from Luke 21 : 24, where Jerusalem is said to be trodden down of the Gentiles, before the announcement in v. 25, of the celestial and terrestrial commotions and signs, which are to precede the revelation from heaven of the Son of man. For if Dr. Robinson's theory be not true, that these verses refer to the final and complete overthrow, and extirpation of the Jews by the emperor Adrian (see below), the apparent difficulty may be removed by supposing Jerusalem to be represented in Luke as being taken by way of anticipation, and not in the strict order of events. This verse in Luke flowed naturally from v. 23, and contained an announcement which strictly should follow v. 27. Such an anticipation of a catastrophe is common in all writers, but is quite different from interposing verses relating to another and far distant event, as must be done, if vs. 29-31 in Matthew are to be referred directly to our Lord's final coming.

In view of the above considerations, I can have no hesitancy in referring these verses in Matthew to the coming of Christ to inflict the final stroke, and close up the scene of calamity and suffering by the total destruction of the city. His messengers had gone before him. Pestilences, famines, earthquakes, wars, commotions had been raging in the earth. The Roman armies had beleaguered Jerusalem. The Christians had fled to the mountains. False Christs and false prophets had arisen and lured multitudes to ruin. The nation was ripe for destruction. Around

the carcasses the birds of prey were beginning to hover. *Immediately* after these preliminary events the Son of man was to come, his approach being preceded by the darkening of the heavenly bodies, the falling of the stars, the shaking of the heavens, and the destruction of the city was no longer to be deferred. This is the obvious and natural explanation of the passage. That the language is similar to that in which Christ's final coming is described cannot be denied. But this is not strange, when we consider, as has been remarked, that the one event is typical of the other, that his coming to destroy Jerusalem is a representation, faint indeed but real, of his glorious and awful coming to take vengeance upon the finally impenitent, and that language is therefore used of it, which seems appropriately to belong to the final judgment. Dr. Robinson refers vs. 29-31 to "the overthrow and complete extirpation of the Jewish people fifty years later under Adrian, when they were sold as slaves, and utterly driven out from the land of their fathers, which was the final catastrophe of the nation, and far more terrible than that of the destruction of Jerusalem, though the latter, in consequence of the vivid description of it by Josephus, has come to be usually considered as the last act in the great tragedy, which it was not." There is no serious objection to this view, but yet the great key-passage (v. 34) compels us to refer it rather to the time of the burning of the city and the temple.

*Tribulation of those days*, i. e. the days immediately preceding the destruction of Jerusalem. *Shall the sun be darkened*, &c. Prof. Stuart (Notes on Apocalypse, Vol. II. p. 163,) remarks, "Nothing is more frequent in the Scripture, than the indication of great changes, especially great calamities, by a description of earthquakes, and tempests, and eclipses of the heavenly

moon shall not give her light, and

luminaries, or the mention of their bloody aspect, occasioned by a murky atmosphere." The ancients almost always connected eclipses and changes of the heavenly bodies with the wrath and judgments of the Deity. Hence they are introduced here, as preceding the awful visitation of our Lord upon the guilty Jewish nation. The language employed has reference to the sun's obscuration in a total eclipse, or by a smoky, lowering atmosphere, such as usually precedes earthquakes, tornadoes, and similar convulsions of nature. *The moon, &c.* There is a parallelism between this and the preceding clause, after the manner of Hebrew poetry. The darkening of the moon is to be referred to the same causes which obscured the sun. Luke calls these obscurations, "signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars," because they were regarded as the signs or symbols of God's wrath. *The stars shall fall, &c.* The atmospheric heavens, the region of *falling stars or meteors*, is here referred to. The cause of these falling bodies being inexplicable, they were regarded by the ancients with great terror. *The powers of the heavens, &c.* The same general idea of calamities and dangers is continued in this parallelism. By the expression, *the powers of the heavens*, is meant the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon, and stars. These in highly figurative language are said to be shaken (literally, *tossed to and fro*, as a ship on the waves of the sea), so that, although after the notion of the ancients, they were fixed in the heavens, as in a solid expanse, some of them became loosened and fell to the earth. See Isa. 34: 4; Rev. 6: 13. The language is based on what is philosophically untrue. But it was not the province of the sacred writers to teach philosophy or natural science. They employed the current language of the times in which they lived. They drew their illustrations and figures of speech from the forms of thought and expression, familiar to the age and country in which they lived. They

the stars shall fall from heaven,

described the movements and changes of the heavenly bodies according to their phenomenal appearance, that is, as they appeared to the senses. All this was just as it should be. The terms of science are ever changing and inconstant. But the phenomenal appearance of the heavenly bodies is the same now, as it was when Moses, David, Isaiah, Matthew, John, and other sacred writers looked upon them. Their language, founded upon this appearance, as it struck the eye, is familiar to us, and will be so to all who shall come after us. The sun will ever in common language rise and set, and cross the equatorial line, the stars or meteors will fall, the heavens will be coneave, the extremities of the sky will touch the earth, &c. Had the sacred writers departed from these universal and familiar forms of speech, their revelation would have been dark, obscure, incapable of translation, from want of sympathy with the common forms, idioms, and laws of language. In respect to the falling of the stars being represented as preceding the shaking of the heavens, commentators find what is called a *hysteron proteron*, i. e. an inversion of terms, or placing of the last first. But it is better to regard the latter clause, as an emphatic repetition of the preceding one.

Luke adds other convulsions of nature, such as "the sea and the waves roaring," a phenomenon which usually accompanies violent earthquakes. In the great earthquake of 1647, which was felt throughout all South America, so extraordinary was the agitation of the sea, in all parts along the coast of Chili, that the fishermen fled to the hills for safety, and the waves rolled so furiously against a sea wall in the port of Cal-lao, 1500 miles distant, as to destroy a portion of it. In 1730, a few minutes after an earthquake had overthrown the city of Concepcion, the sea was observed to retire several hundred yards, after which it returned with a wave most appalling in appearance and effect, destroying about 100 lives. But the

and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken :

30 <sup>f</sup> And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven :

*f* Da. 7 : 13.

most remarkable agitation of the sea was that which followed the earthquake of 1835 in Concepcion. "After the excessive vibration of the earth had ceased, the sea retired many leagues from the old shore-line : and two hours later returning with impetuosity to the beach, swept every thing before it with the reflux, bearing men, cattle, and household effects upon its billows. Such as succeeded in gaining the hills remained there until danger had ceased, listening to the shrieks of those whom the waters buffeted, nor was it until daylight that the horrors of the scene were fully appreciated. According to the statement of some, the sea sent its waves over the town three times." Gilliss's U. S. Naval Astron. Exp. vol. I. p. 95. These references of the agitation of the sea during earthquakes, show the beauty and power of the imagery here employed by our Savior. Olshausen refers the celestial phenomena in this verse to actual occurrences and appearances, "not denoting absolute destruction of the heavenly bodies, but simply violent shakings and fearful commotions, which will for a time withdraw them from the eye of man, and veil every thing in awful night." But in his note on v. 34, he is forced to acknowledge that both this, and the preceding verses of the prophecy, have reference to the immediate present [i. e. the downfall of Jerusalem] as well as a further reference to the future. If so, how did this prediction, if it refers, as he maintains, to real shakings and commotions of the heavenly bodies, "veiling every thing in awful night," find its primary fulfilment at the destruction of Jerusalem, or before the men of that generation passed away? But this difficulty vanishes, if we regard these celestial phenomena as symbolically spoken. ¶

30. *And then.* After the civil commotions and dire calamities indicated by the preceding imagery. *Shall appear the sign,* &c. Some find a slightly

sarcastic allusion here to the sign of our Lord's Messiahship, required by the Pharisees and Sadducees (16 : 1). A sign should now be given them which was then denied, but it would be the sign of their utter destruction. Others refer it to the inquiry of the disciples, "what shall be the sign of thy coming?" On the ground mainly of its omission in the parallel passage in Mark and Luke, the German critics regard it as pleonastic. Alford refers it to the sign of the cross, "by which all shall know that the Son of man is at hand." But the parallel passage in Mark and Luke seems clearly to show, that "the sign of the Son of man" is our Lord's own appearance, not literally so, as in the day of judgment, to which Dan. 7 : 13, upon which the expression is founded, refers, but virtually so, in the fearful vengeance which he was about to inflict upon the unbelieving and rebellious Jews. The effect of his presence, on that occasion, would be so manifest, that all would feel and acknowledge it, as though he was seen with the natural eye. *In heaven,* the air, the region of clouds and storms. This is more fully expressed in the latter part of the verse, *coming in the clouds,* &c. More literally, *upon the clouds* as a throne or chariot ; or perhaps the idea is that the divine seat was both *upon* and *surrounded with* clouds (compare Rev. 1 : 7, where this idea is expressed in the Greek), which sustained and bore it along. See Ps. 18 : 11 ; 104 : 3 ; Ezek. 1 : 4 ; 19 : 16 ; 40 : 34 ; Isa. 6 : 4 ; 19 : 1. *Shall all the tribes,* &c. Reference is had to the inhabitants of Judea, the language being based upon the ancient division of the land of Canaan among the twelve tribes. The expression is here designed to be comprehensive, and to embrace all who dwelt in the land. Those who apply this language directly to the general judgment, refer the words to the inhabitants of the whole earth. But this, for the reasons above given, is in-



and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the

g Zec. 12: 12. h Ch. 16: 27; Ma. 13: 26; Re. 1: 7.

admissible, except in a secondary sense. It is not to be supposed that every person in the land of Judea, would so connect the calamities and downfall of the nation with the crucifixion of Jesus, as to mourn because of him. But in their terrible sufferings, many would discern the tokens of his avenging presence, whom they or their fathers had caused to be crucified. No figure of speech is more common than that, by which the whole is taken for the part. Compare Rev. 1: 7, which is regarded by the best interpreters as referring to the same event which our Lord is here predicting, *They shall see*, &c. This language is based on Deut. 7: 13, which was referred by the Jews to the Messiah, and from which they gave him the appellation, *Cloud-comer*. A reference to the passage quoted in Daniel, will show that the coming of Christ to enter upon his Messianic kingdom is referred to. Whether that time of his induction into his kingdom, was when he rose from the dead and was constituted king in Zion (Ps. 2: 6), or when he set up his kingdom upon the ruins of the Jewish persecuting power, or at the final consummation of all things, when he shall put all his enemies under his feet (1 Cor. 15: 25), is a matter of great doubt with interpreters. One thing is evident, that it is an assumption of lawful power and authority on the part of Christ, and may without any violence to the sound principles of interpretation be applied, at least in a secondary sense, to his coming to destroy Jerusalem, the principal seat of his enemies. That this language, in a higher sense (and perhaps the primary one in the original prophecy of Daniel), is applicable to the coming of Christ at the day of judgment, cannot be denied. But its application here, for reasons which have been given (see N. on v. 29), must be confined to our Lord's coming to take

clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 And he shall send his an-

i Ch. 13: 41; 1 Co. 15: 52; 1 Th. 4: 16.

vengeance upon the Jewish nation. *With power and great glory*, i. e. with a great display of majesty and omnipotence. He was crucified as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" but in the exercise of his divine omnipotence, and arrayed in glory, he was now to break his enemies with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. There is in this whole passage an implied contrast between Christ in his day of humiliation, suffering, and death, and the glory and power with which he should afterwards be invested.

31. The striking similarity between the words of this verse, and those passages cited in Note on v. 29, referring to the scenes of the day of judgment, has caused many to hesitate in applying them to Christ's coming to destroy Jerusalem. But verbal resemblances should never cause us to transgress the great and well-established laws of interpretation. The context, both that which precedes and which follows, most clearly points to the appearance of Christ to take vengeance upon the Jews, and this verse cannot therefore be forced out of its natural position in the line of our Lord's prophecy. It constitutes a portion of the prediction, and of those great events and appearances, of which it is said in v. 34, that "this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." What are mere verbal resemblances, or highly figurative expressions of grandeur and power, which seem to find their full reference only to the scenes of the last day, compared with this plain and positive declaration of our Lord himself, that ALL THESE THINGS should be fulfilled (or *come to pass*) before the close of that present generation. Inasmuch, however, as the language of this verse accords so well with that, which in 25: 31, 32; 2 Thess. 1: 7, describes the

gels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather

together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

coming of our Lord to judge the world, it may be referred in a secondary, but still higher and grander sense, to that great event. *Shall send his angels.* Who are the angels here spoken of? Some take them to be the preachers of Christ's gospel, the angels or messengers (see Rev. 1 : 20 ; 2 : 1, 8, 12, &c.) sent forth into all lands, to gather converts into one society under Christ their common head. But what has this to do with the great converging point of the prediction, to which we have now come, viz. the downfall of Jerusalem? It is too forced, far-fetched, and inapposite, to be adopted as the true exposition. Alford, in accordance with his theory, that both comings of Christ are parallel through this whole prediction, and that words expressive of both events are enwrapped together, refers this verse to the general judgment, and distinguishes between the angelic trumpet-blowers, and the trump of God (1 Thess. 4 : 16, 17), making the former to stand connected with the first resurrection (Rev. 20 : 5), and the latter to be the great Trumpet of the general resurrection (Ps. 50 : 1). But the true rendering of the passage cited in 1 Thessalonians is, "with the voice of the archangel, *even* with the trump of God," no distinction being intended by the second clause, but simply that the archangel bore and sounded on that dread occasion, the trump of God. We cannot concur with Alford then, either in his reference of this passage to the general judgment, or in the unfounded distinction which he makes between the angelic trumpeters and the trump of God, which is to summon the dead to judgment. No theory is valid, which does not recognize the declaration in v. 34, to which reference has just been made. Who then are these angelic trumpeters, sent forth to gather the elect from the four winds? It seems to me that reference is had to the guardian angels, who in the dread-

ful carnage at the downfall of the city, were to protect and guide to places of safety all Christ's followers, who had not been able to seek safety by previous flight. This receives confirmation from the parallel passage in Luke 21 : 28. It is a tradition, that not one of the Christians perished at the siege and capture of Jerusalem. Let no one stumble at this interpretation, on the ground that such an angelic array would hardly be employed to save a few of Christ's followers, who might be exposed to death at the capture of the city. A mountain was once filled with horses and chariots of fire, to protect a single prophet of the Lord from his enemies (2 Kings 6 : 17). No angelic ministry is too exalted to watch over those, whom Christ died to redeem and raise to heaven. *With a great sound of a trumpet.* The language is borrowed from the custom of the Jews, to call the people together to solemn assemblies with trumpets, and other sonorous wind instruments (Ps. 81 : 3 ; Jer. 4 : 5 ; Joel 2 : 1, 15). In time of peace it was blown more softly, but in war it was sounded with a deeper and more stirring tone. There were the horn or crooked trumpet, and the straight trumpet, which is the one, doubtless, here meant. The guardian angels are here represented as summoning the Christians of Judea together, to be conducted to places of safety (see Ps. 27 : 5 ; Isa. 26 : 20, 21), and the same imagery is also employed, in the gathering of all mankind before the judgment seat of Christ (1 Thess. 4 : 16 ; 2 Thess. 1 : 7). *From the four winds*, i. e. from all parts of the land of Judea. The Jews noted but four points of the compass, east, west, north, and south. These points comprised all the intermediate ones, and therefore denoted all quarters. The four winds were used to denote these cardinal points of the compass. Here the expression is rendered more comprehensive and complete by the subjoined

32 Now learn <sup>k</sup> a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know <sup>l</sup> that it is near, *even* at the doors.

ℓ Lu. 21: 29. ℓ Ja. 5: 9. m Ch. 16: 28 & 29: 36; Ma. 13: 30; Lu. 21: 32.

clause, *from one end of the heavens to the other*, reference being had to the visible heavens, or horizon, which seems to touch the earth.

32. *Now learn a parable from the fig-tree*; literally, *now learn the parable from the fig tree*, i. e. receive the illustration of this subject furnished from the fig tree. Our English version, by omitting the article found in the Greek with *parable*, weakens the sense. *Branch is tender* (literally, *soft to the touch*), i. e. when young and tender shoots are putting forth. Fig trees began to sprout at the time of the vernal equinox. *Putteth forth leaves*. When leaves begin to appear. *Summer is at hand*. This is a short but expressive illustration, designed to show the certainty of the signs preceding the coming of the Son of man, as the springing forth of the buds and leaves of spring, was a certain indication of approaching summer.

33. *All these things*, i. e. the signs before mentioned, such as wars, famines, convulsions of nature, &c. *Even at the doors* is not a separate clause in the original, but is joined to the preceding words, *is near at the doors*, the closest proximity being denoted.

34. *This generation*. The men now living. See N. on 1: 17. *Shall not pass (away Luke)*, i. e. shall not all die. The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus took place only about 40 years after this prediction was uttered. This limits the preceding calamities and commotions to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the Jewish persecuting power. No language could make this plainer than that here used. How it

34 Verily I say unto you, <sup>m</sup>This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

35 <sup>n</sup>Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

36 <sup>o</sup>But of that day and

<sup>n</sup> Ps. 102: 26; Is. 51: 6; Je. 31: 35, 36; ch. 5: 13; Ma. 13: 31; Lu. 21: 33; He. 1: 11.  
<sup>o</sup> Ma. 13: 32; Ac. 1: 7; 1 Th. 5: 2; 2 Pe. 3: 10.

can be so lost sight of by interpreters truly wonderful. With these words of the Lord Jesus himself, limiting the foregoing predictions to that very generation, we do not see how any one can dream of referring them, except in the way of accommodation, to the judgment of the great day. † *These things*. The pronoun here employed in the Greek, refers to what immediately precedes, and must therefore include vs. 29-31, in the events which were to take place, before the men of that generation should pass away. Unless this verse is deprived of all its force, it must refer, beyond all doubt, the foregoing prediction to the coming of Christ to destroy Jerusalem. Olshausen sees and acknowledges the force of this, and seemingly forgetful that portions of the preceding prediction he has declared to be referable to nothing short of the final appearance of Christ, he makes this remarkable concession: "The only way of explaining these difficulties [i. e. such as arise from the closing of the preceding predictions by such a positive affirmation on the part of Christ, that they all shall take place before the generation then on earth should pass away], is to view the prophecy with reference to the immediate present, but in such a manner that every thing includes a further reference to the future." So convenient is it to fall upon the *double sense*, when pressed by a passage like this.

35. *Heaven and earth, &c.* Sooner should the material universe be dissolved and come to an end, than this prediction be unfulfilled. This proverbial expression (on which see N. on 5: 1

hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, <sup>r</sup> but my Father only.

*p* Zec. 14: 7.

18), denotes the absolute certainty of the coming to pass of the things here foretold.

36. This verse is quoted as a triumphant refutation of the doctrine of Christ's divinity. But it has no weight against the true view of his complex or twofold nature. In his human nature, separate from his divine nature, he was ignorant of the future, and this is no more strange than the declaration that he increased in wisdom (Luke 2: 52), or had a soul which shrunk from the endurance of distress and anguish (26: 38; Mark 14: 34; John 12: 27; 13: 31), just like any human being. Such passages furnish no difficulty, if the complex nature of Jesus as God-man be kept in view. Nor is this passage a proof that the day of judgment is referred to. To finite intelligence, the future is unfathomable, whether it pertains to an event near at hand, or to the remote ages of eternity. The Son of man in his human nature could as easily tell the precise time of his coming to the final judgment, as to destroy Jerusalem, and his ignorance of the time of the one event, was not more strange and inexplicable than of the other. We are thrown back again upon the context to determine its reference, and that, as we have seen, points clearly to his coming to destroy Jerusalem. That the precise time of this event is referred to, is evident from the words *that day and hour*, as we say the *hour and minute* (Alford). Our Lord had predicted in general terms his coming to destroy Jerusalem. It was to be soon. The race of men then living, were not all to pass away before its accomplishment. But the precise day and hour was known only to Him, with whom the future was as the past. The disciples were not, therefore, to expect any more definite revelation in respect to the precise time, than what had just been given in v. 34. Prof. Kendrick, in his note on Olshausen's interpreta-

37 But as the days of Noah *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

tion of this passage, refers very ingeniously the imputed ignorance of Christ to his strong hyperbolic language, that the time of this great event was to be kept a profound secret. The knowledge had never been lodged with him, the Great Revealer, for the purpose of being communicated to man. But is not the ignorance of the Son on this point, of the same nature and extent as that of men and angels, with which it is closely connected? And, after all, is there any more difficulty in regarding our Lord as ignorant of the time of some future event, than in the idea, that he could increase in wisdom, i. e. attain, as he advanced in years, to new and clearer views of truth? The difficulty wholly vanishes if we refer it to his human nature. But if we inquire how his human nature cohered with his divine nature, so that ignorance of any sort could be predicated of it, we are at once on a sea whose depths are unfathomable. The fact is all we know, the mode is inexplicable. *No man*; literally, *no one*, referring evidently to human intelligences. *Angels of heaven*. So called because heaven is their abode. *But my Father only*. In Mark the words, "neither the Son," precede this clause, reference being had to his human nature, as above stated.

37, 38. Although our Lord withheld from his disciples the precise time when he should come to destroy Jerusalem, a thing locked up in the inscrutable recesses of his divine mind, yet he proceeds to speak of the sudden and unexpected manner, in which he should make his appearance. This he illustrates by the suddenness with which the flood came, and destroyed those who lived in the time of Noah. *As the days of Noah were*, i. e. as the state of things was in Noah's time. *For as in the days, &c.* The point of resemblance, between the times of Noah, and the days of the divine judgment upon Jerusalem, is here brought out. *In the days that were, &c.*



38 ' For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark,

39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all  
*q* Ge. 6 : 3, 4, 5, & 7 : 5 ; Lu. 17 : 26 ; 1 Pe. 3 : 20.

This refers to the years immediately preceding the flood. *They were eating, &c.* They were engaged in their usual enjoyments and festivities. It is worthy of note, that all the engagements and pursuits of these antediluvians, as here given, had reference to the indulgence of their physical appetites and the pursuit of pleasure. The things enumerated are not in themselves wrong, yet in the manner in which our Lord refers to them, we see that the men of those days were not only in a state of thoughtless security, but of gross sensuality. This also receives additional confirmation from Luke 21 : 34, 35. *Eating and drinking*, i. e. feasting and revelling. As Alford well remarks, shows that "it is a mistake to imagine that we have in Gen. 9 : 20, the account of the *first* wine and its effects." *Marrying.* See N. on 22 : 30. *Giving in marriage.* This is spoken of parents who gave away their daughters in marriage. *Until the day.* They were warned by Noah (2 Pet. 2 : 5) of the approaching flood, yet thoughtless and unconcerned, they indulged in scenes of mirth and festivity, until the very day that he entered the ark. The parallel between these antediluvians and the Jews, is not to be pressed too far. The latter, previous to the day of their final ruin, were undergoing the most dire calamities, as predicted in vs. 15-31 ; Luke 21 : 25, 26, but at heart they were just as unprepared and careless, in regard to their approaching doom, as were the inhabitants of the old world whom the deluge swept away. The simple point of comparison is the insensibility of both to the danger which threatened them, and which therefore came upon them in the most sudden and unexpected manner.

away ; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

40 ' Then shall two be in the field ; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

41 Two women shall be grind-

*r* Lu. 17 : 34, &c.

39. *And knew not, &c.* Even when the tempest burst upon them, we have no reason to suppose that they had serious apprehensions as to its duration and violence. *Until the flood came* and with irresistible force swept them to destruction. *All away.* Our Lord here corroborates the statement in Gen. 7 : 23, that the deluge was universal in its effect. *So shall also the coming, &c.* It will be sudden and unlooked for. The reader of Josephus will not fail to see how fully this prediction was verified, in the infatuation which possessed the Jews from the time of their first rebellion, to the very destruction of their city and temple. They looked to their false Christs and false prophets, but never once turned their eye to Him whom they had rejected and crucified, until too late they saw him coming in the clouds of heaven, to inflict upon them the vengeance which they deserved, and which, in the moment of their mad impiety and unbelief, they had invoked upon themselves (see 27 : 25).

40, 41. In these verses the extent, as well as severity of the calamities, is predicted. They were to reach the most humble classes. No condition of life was to be exempt from the wide-spread ruin. But even here should be seen such providential deliverances from death, that it would be, as though of two men working together in the same field, or of two women at the same hand-mill, one should be stricken down and the other escape in safety. *In the field,* pursuing their daily labor. *Shall be taken,* i. e. shall be seized and put to death, or led away captive. Those who refer this part of the prophecy to the final coming of our Lord, give to these words the sense of being *taken* into Christ's favor, or *left* exposed to his

ing at a mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

42 ' Watch therefore; for ye

8 Ch. 25 : 13 ; Ma. 13 : 33, &c. ; Lu. 21 : 36.

wrath. Alford denies their reference to the great judgment of 25 : 31-46, but refers them to the gathering in of the elect, at the period of the millennial dispensation. Neither of these views are admissible, for the preceding context points directly to temporal calamities and deliverances. The expressions are doubtless proverbial, yet there is nothing to forbid our belief that the prediction was verified in many instances, during the wars of the Jews and Romans, especially at the final siege of Jerusalem. *And the other left*, i. e. escape unharmed. *Shall be grinding*, &c. See N. on 18 : 6. This expression denotes the closest proximity, and if one escaped, while the other fell into the hands of the enemy, it would indicate a most wondrous and providential deliverance. *At the mill*. Some adopt the reading and interpretation, *at the mill-house*. But the reading is not well sustained, nor is the sense so apposite to the point to be illustrated, as the commonly received text.

42. *Watch therefore*. This admonition to watchfulness closes up our Lord's prediction of his coming to destroy Jerusalem. In Luke, the words "and pray always," are subjoined, which shows that spiritual watchfulness is referred to. Those who were watching for the coming of the Lord would keep in remembrance his words, be quick to discern the signs of approaching danger, and take measures to escape it. But this direction may be taken, as also many of the preceding cautions, commands, and declarations, in a secondary sense, as applicable to the preparation of heart by prayerful and watchful obedience, for the coming of Christ at the hour of death, and also at the great day of judgment. Thus only are they applicable to us, who live so long after the grand catastrophe of the destruction of Jerusalem, to which they had primary

know not what hour your Lord doth come.

43 ¶ ' But know this, that if the

† Lu. 12 : 39 ; 1 Th. 5 : 2 ; 2 Pe. 3 : 10 ; Re. 3 : 3, & 16 : 15.

reference. Luke also adds : "that ye may be accounted worthy." This is an expansion of what is uttered in a more condensed form in Matthew.

43. This verse by an easy and natural transition, commences a series of predictions and instructions which can be referred only to the day of judgment. Dr. Robinson well remarks : "This appears from the fact, that the matter of these sections is added by Matthew, after Mark and Luke have ended their parallel reports relative to the Jewish catastrophe, and Matthew here commences with v. 43, the same discourse which Luke has given on another occasion in Galilee (Luke 12 : 39-48). This discourse in Luke has reference obviously to our Lord's final coming, and that it has here the same reference, is apparent from the appropriateness of the subsequent warning, and their intimate connection with 25 : 31-46, which latter all interpreters of note agree in referring to the general judgment." In addition to this convincing view of Dr. Robinson, it may be remarked, that in the progress of the discourse from this point, we meet with no signs by which this greater coming of our Lord is to be heralded. But the whole burden, onward to the description of the judgment in 25 : 31-46, is the most solemn and urgently repeated exhortations to watchfulness, and a constant state of readiness to meet the Son of man, at this his great and final coming. In this portion our Lord replies to the question of his disciples, "and of the end of the world?" the full import of which they did not realize, connecting it, as they did, with the closing up of the Jewish dispensation, and therefore making it only a varied form of the question, as to when, and preceded by what signs, Jerusalem was to be destroyed. But as our Lord well knew that these two great comings of his were wholly dis-

goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

u Ch. 25 : 13 ; 1 Th. 5 : 6.

connected, he now proceeds to speak of his final coming, and to exhort to watchfulness thereto. Thus he replied fully and explicitly to the question of his disciples, and also disabused their mind of the erroneous view, which they had previously entertained, of the identity of the destruction of Jerusalem with the final consummation of things at the end of the world. This question had reference to *one single event*, the destruction of Jerusalem ; our Lord's reply gave to the latter clause of it its true import, *the end of the world*, the closing up and final arrangement of all things at the day of judgment. In reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, there were unmistakable signs of his coming, but of his second and greater advent at the end of the world, no premonitory sign whatever was to be vouchsafed, but a state of constant watchfulness was to be maintained in reference thereto. The duty of watchfulness in reference to the Jewish catastrophe, could only be theirs who lived at the time of that event, but the duties in the remaining portion of this prediction, are of universal application to the church, in every age to the end of time.

*But know this*, i. e. be assured of this which I am about to say. *Goodman of the house*. See N. on 20 : 11. *In what watch*, i. e. at what particular time of the night. *The thief*, i. e. robber or house-breaker, as appears from the connection. The article gives to the noun a generic sense, denoting a person of the class referred to. So we say, *the farmer, the merchant, the mechanic, &c.* *Would come to break into the house. Would have watched*. Had timely notice been given of the thief's approach, the master of the house would have been on the alert, according to the proverb, "forewarned, forearmed." But

44 "Therefore be ye also ready : for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

45 \* Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath

α Lu. 12 : 42 ; Ac. 20 : 28 ; 1 Co. 4 : 2 ; He. 3 : 5.

the fact that no such warning was to be expected, created the necessity for unceasing vigilance. Here lies the point of the similitude. As the vigilant householder does not wait to be informed of the approach of the thief, but is in a state of constant watchfulness against his attempts, so he who watches for the coming of his Lord, needs not to be informed of the particular time in which he may be expected, but will be in constant readiness to receive him. This idea is still further enforced in the following context. *To be broken up* ; literally, *to be dug through*. See N. on 6 : 19.

44. *Therefore*, i. e. because your situation is like that of the householder, in the sudden and unexpected test to which your watchfulness will be put. *Be ye also ready*. Be in a state of constant readiness to hail the advent of your Lord. *For in such an hour, &c.* This contains the reason for the spiritual vigilance and activity enjoined in the preceding clause. *The Son of man cometh*. This refers primarily to the coming of Christ to judgment, which, to those who then dwell on the earth, will be sudden and unexpected. But in its practical application to us, it has reference to his coming at the hour of death, when the time given to prepare to meet him in judgment will terminate, and our future destiny will be determined for ever.

45. *Who then is a faithful, &c.* This question serves to bring the character of the good steward more fully to notice. It is as though our Lord had said : a servant who is found to be prudent and faithful in the discharge of his duties, will always be advanced to a station of higher trust and usefulness. So shall it be with him, who is thus approved at his Lord's coming. Al-

made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

46 *ν* Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

*γ* Re. 16 : 15.

though the language is primarily used of the head servant or steward of a family, yet in its spiritual application, it is not to be restricted to Christ's ministers, but may be regarded as a promise and caution addressed to all God's people. *His lord.* The master of the family. *Hath made ruler, i. e.* has given authority to dispense tasks, and apportion food to the under servants. This appears from the next clause, which is evidently explanatory, *to give them meat in due season, i. e.* to see that they have suitable food and at the proper time. When the household was large, this would be an important and responsible office. There would be other duties belonging to the head servant, but this is mentioned as being one peculiarly pleasant to the benevolent and sympathetic heart, and the neglect or abuse of which, would indicate a very depraved state of mind. It also forms a well-marked contrast with the ill treatment, which the under servants received from the evil servant (vs. 48, 49). *Meat.* The word in the original denotes food or nourishment of any kind, and such is its meaning here. *Due season.* The orientals generally took a slight repast about 10 or 11 o'clock, and reserved their principal meal to about 6 o'clock in the afternoon. Some think that the word *season*, has here no reference to the daily supply of their wants, but to their monthly apportionment of food. The general sense remains the same, to whichever interpretation we may incline.

46. *When he cometh, i. e.* returns after his temporary absence. *So doing, i. e.* attending faithfully to the interests of his absent lord, and especially to the comfort and welfare of his fellow-servants. The payment of the hire of the

47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

48 But and if that evil servant

*ε* Ch. 25 : 21, 23; Lu. 22 : 29.

vineyard, was the prominent test of obedience in that parable (21 : 33-39), but here kindness and attention to his fellow servants, is made the ground of approval and reward. A sense of responsibility to his absent lord, and watchfulness against his coming, would appear in nothing more marked, than his treatment of those placed under his temporary authority. This was therefore one of the best tests of his real character.

47. *Shall make him ruler over all his goods; literally, shall place him over all his possessions.* This conduct of the householder, in elevating to a higher post the faithful servant, is not to be too closely pressed in its spiritual application. It is true that at Christ's coming, his faithful servants will be rewarded. But we are not to infer from this illustration, that one will be placed over another, or that the grades of glorified saints will consist in any thing, save their different degrees of attainment in moral excellence. This parable, like all others, has some circumstances designed only to give completeness to the story, and not to be taken into account in its application. Watchfulness and fidelity are the prominent points of illustration.

48, 49. *But and if.* The original is simply, *but if. That evil servant.* As no evil servant has previously been mentioned, the word *that* is to be explained by supposing an ellipsis: *But if that evil servant* (on the supposition that he is evil) *shall say, &c.* Such an ellipsis is natural and removes all obscurity. *Shall say in his heart.* Thoughts confined to his own bosom are here referred to. *Delayeth his coming; literally, is a long time in coming, i. e.* prolongs his absence beyond the time set for his return. *And*



shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

49 And shall begin to smite *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

*shall begin to smite, &c.* Gradation in wickedness is here indicated. At first he revolves in mind the time of his lord's absence, a thing with which he had no concern, and which he should have left to the superior wisdom of his master. He then begins to cherish a hope, that some casualty had befallen him, and that he would never return. This idea getting possession of his mind, as a consequence, he begins to lord it over his fellow servants, treat them with great cruelty, and give himself up to riot and debauchery. *With the drunken, i. e.* with his drunken companions.

50. *In a day when he looketh not for him.* This constitutes the ground of difference between the good and the bad servant. The former was living in constant expectation of his lord's coming, and remained therefore faithful to the end; the latter, as though he was never to be called to account, plunged into excesses of all kinds. The coming of his lord was sudden and unexpected. He had no time to set things in order, or to invent plausible excuses for his shameless conduct. In the very midst of his drunkenness, licentious revels, and cruel abuse of his fellow servants, he was surprised and overwhelmed by the appearance of his lord, and consigned to immediate punishment. *An hour that he is not aware of, i. e.* a time of which he had no previous knowledge. This is an emphatic repetition of the preceding thought.

51. *Shall cut him asunder.* Reference seems to be had to the punishment of cutting or sawing criminals asunder (see Dan. 2 : 5 ; 3 : 29 ; Heb. 4 : 12 ; 11 : 37). As this wicked servant

51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

#### CHAPTER XXV.

**T**HEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps,

*a Ch. 8 : 12, & 25 : 30.*

is shown by what follows to have survived the punishment, perhaps, however, nothing more is meant than a severe flagellation, which cut his flesh to pieces. *And appoint him his portion; literally, and assign (him) his place. With hypocrites, i. e.* among the vilest of men. We must not suppose our Lord to depart here from the language of the parable, and refer to the punishment, which he himself will bring upon hypocrites and false professors. His parables are all natural and complete, and furnish no confused blending together of the similitude, and the truth designed to be illustrated. At the same time, as Olshausen remarks, the conduct of the evil servant may well be designated as *hypocrisy*, because being really in the service of the world, and only professedly in that of Christ, he wishes his return to be deferred because he dreads it. *There shall be weeping, &c.* See N. on 8 : 12.

It is evident that this parable was designed to illustrate the duty of continued vigilance and fidelity in the Redeemer's service. The precise time of his coming to judgment, or at the hour of death, was withheld from his disciples, but as the watchful householder guarded his house against the midnight robber, and as the faithful servant was in readiness at all times for the coming of his lord, so his followers were to be in a state of constant expectation of his coming, and not like the wicked servant to be unprepared for that event.

#### CHAP. XXV.

1-30. PARABLES OF THE TEN VIRGINS, AND THE FIVE TALENTS. *Mount of Olives.* Fourth day of the week.

and went forth to meet "the bridegroom.

*a* Ep. 5 : 29, 30 ; Re. 19 : 7, & 21 : 2, 9.

This chapter is a continuation of the discourse, with which the preceding chapter closed, and is to be referred throughout to the coming of Christ at the day of judgment. But as the moral acts of life determine our destiny beyond the grave, our Lord virtually comes at the hour of death, and passes judgment upon the soul, to be more openly declared and confirmed at his judgment bar. The parables of the ten virgins and the five talents, may be therefore referred secondarily and practically to Christ's coming at the hour of death, although having primary reference to his coming at the end of the world. In the parable of the ten virgins, which is first in order, the same rule of interpretation is to be observed, which has been laid down in the explication of previous parables, not to force the minor circumstances, employed to make the illustration lively and natural, to a definite and specific spiritual signification. The great point of the parable is to impress on all Christ's followers, the duty of being in constant readiness for his final coming. This was enforced in verses 43-51 of the preceding chapter. But it is of such vast importance, that our Lord repeats it under a variety of illustrations. With this general design of the parable before our eye, we are not to press every incident of it to the teaching of some great spiritual truth. Because they were all designated *virgins*, we are not to suppose with Olshausen, that they all represent true Christians, some having a more plentiful supply of the oil of grace, on account of which they are to have a place at the marriage supper of the Lamb, while the class represented by the foolish virgins, are only to be admitted, at a more remote period, to the joys of the blessed. Nor are we to infer, because there were *five* wise and *five* foolish virgins, that the number of Christ's sincere followers and of hypo-

2 <sup>b</sup> And five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish.

*b* Ch. 13 : 47, & 22 : 10.

crites are just equal. Nor should we argue from the fact, that the foolish virgins started forth to meet the bridegroom with lighted lamps, which failed them through want of oil to keep them well fed, that there is any real grace at any time in the hypocrite and false professor. The fact too that they all slumbered and slept, is not to be interpreted as implying that real Christians, as well as false professors, will be stupid and careless at the coming of our Lord. Nor are we to suppose that in going to purchase oil, the foolish virgins are types of false professors, as though they could possess themselves of real grace, after the voice of the coming bridegroom was heard, and would be excluded, not because they failed of a plentiful supply of the oil of grace, but because they obtained possession of it too late. These, and other similar inferences, have no basis in the parable, but are fanciful, and lead to erroneous conclusions.

1. *Then*, i. e. at the coming of Christ to judgment. *The kingdom of heaven* here designates the state of things in the church of Christ at his coming. This, in regard to the perseverance, prayer, and watchfulness of some, and the want of these essential graces in others, is similar to what took place in the history of the ten virgins. The round and definite number *ten*, a favorite one with the Jews, renders the parable more natural. *Lamps*. These were torches or flambeaux, consisting of small iron or brass bars inserted into a stick, to which pieces of linen dipped in oil were fastened. In order to prevent the oil from flowing down the hand of the person who carried it, a small vessel of brass or iron surrounded the bottom of the stick, into which the oil dripped. Vessels of oil (see v. 4) were provided, from which the linen, when dry of oil, was again saturated. Thus the lamps

3 They that *were* foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them :

were trimmed (see v. 7), to be relit when occasion demanded. *Went forth* from their dwellings. *To meet the bridegroom.* On the approach of the bridegroom with his attendants (See N. on 9: 15), to conduct the bride to the house of his father, the bride, with her attendant virgins, took a position, where they might be in readiness to receive him, when his attendants should utter the signal cry, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh." The parties being united, the bride, preceded by her virgin attendants with lighted torches, was conducted to the house of the bridegroom's father. Some find in this parable an allusion to the practice of the female friends, to go forth in advance of the marriage party, and wait for it at a proper place. When notice was given of the approach of the bridegroom, these females would arise and join the procession. Others think that reference is had to a second party, consisting of female friends of the bridegroom, who came forth to meet and welcome the procession, as it approached from the house of the bride's father. But both these practices rest on feeble testimony, and it is better to regard these virgins as constituting the retinue of the bride. The precise time of the bridegroom's approach to conduct his bride from her father's house, of course, would be unknown to her or her party.

2. *Wise*, i. e. prudent, thoughtful. This was evinced by their forethought in providing oil enough to last, even in case the bridegroom tarried beyond the expected time. How beautifully does this represent the watchfulness and prudent forethought of the true believer. *Foolish.* In their want of prudence and thoughtfulness, they were the very opposite of the wise virgins. This appeared from the small quantity of oil which they took, which was only enough to last, in case the bridegroom made his immediate approach.

3. 4. *They that were foolish*; liter-

4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

5 While the bridegroom tarried,

ally, *such as were foolish.* The expression is itself indefinite, but is rendered definite by what precedes. *Took their lamps.* These marriage processions always took place in the night, and hence these virgins started with lighted lamps. *And took no oil, &c.* They took no precaution to have the means of replenishing their lamps, in case the oil in them should be consumed before the bridegroom approached. These virgins answer very well to the stony-ground hearers (see N. on 13: 20, 21). They had no oil with them, no root in themselves, and hence did not persevere to the end. *In their vessels.* See N. on v. 1. *With their lamps*, i. e. besides the oil which was already burning in their lamps or torches. As far as readiness was concerned, it was to them a matter of little importance whether the bridegroom came in the early part of the evening, or procrastinated his approach until midnight. The duty of being in a state of readiness for the coming of Christ, drawn from the conduct of these wise virgins, is the great point enforced by this parable.

5. *Tarried.* This is the same word, which is used in 24: 48, and there translated *delayeth*. It denotes a lingering or delaying beyond what was expected. It was this unexpected delay, that tested the forethought and prudence of the virgins. *They all slumbered and slept*; literally, *they all nodded and fell asleep.* The expression denotes the gradual approach of sleep, to such as occupy a sitting position, and strive at first to withstand the disposition to slumber. These virgins made efforts to keep awake, but finally yielded to the influence of sleep. There was nothing wrong in this, provided they were ready to meet the bridegroom in a suitable manner, when his coming was announced. Asleep or awake, the wise virgins were ready to perform the ceremony expected of them; but had the foolish virgins been

they all slumbered and slept.

6 And at midnight <sup>d</sup> there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

c 1 Th. 5: 6. <sup>d</sup> Ch. 24: 31; 1 Th. 4: 16.  
e Lu. 12: 35.

all the time awake, they would notwithstanding have been without oil to resuscitate their expiring lamps. We are not, therefore, to lay any stress, for good or for bad, upon the incident of their having fallen asleep.

6. *At midnight.* A late hour; but when the bridegroom came some distance, or was delayed by some unforeseen and unavoidable event, it was probably not unusual. From this passage arose probably the tradition, that Christ would make his final appearance as judge at midnight. But this is a very absurd idea, for the time of midnight under one horizon would be noon day under another. *There was a cry made* by the attendants of the bridegroom approaching in the distance. *Go ye out.* A better rendering would be, *come ye forth*, as the words are spoken by the retinue of the bridegroom. It may be well to notice here that the bride is not mentioned, because she carried no lamp in the procession. In the spiritual application of the parable, the bride is the church of which these virgins are the representatives.

7. 8. *Arose* from the sitting or recumbent position, in which they had been sleeping. *And trimmed* (literally, *arranged, put in order*) *their lamps*, which were going out (see v. 8). This was an easy task for the wise virgins, who took oil to replenish the linen which composed the wick of their torches. Not so with the foolish virgins. Their lights had gone out, and they had no stock of oil with which to relight them. In their perplexity, they entreat their companions to lend them oil, but, for the reason given in v. 9, are denied their request, and obliged to pay the penalty of their negligence, by going

7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

9 But the wise answered, saying, *Not so*; lest there be not

away to purchase oil, at the very moment when they hear the joyous shouts of the approaching marriage procession. Here is the point of illustration against which, in its spiritual application, our Lord warns his disciples. *Are gone out*; literally, *are going out*. They were in the very act of expiring, and although the wise, by a fresh supply of oil, immediately resuscitated the flame of their torches, the foolish had no means to do this, and were left in utter darkness.

9. *Not so, lest.* Our common translation supplies the words *not so*. They are omitted in the original, as the ancients felt a sort of shame or delicacy in denying a request, and the clause which follows marks with sufficient clearness the denial. The same prudence, which prompted the wise virgins to bring a supply of oil to meet any emergency, forbade their sharing it with their improvident companions. This was right, for had they yielded to their request, before they had reached the house of the bridegroom's father, all the lamps might have expired, and the bridal procession been left in darkness. So in the kingdom of grace, no one has a greater spiritual supply than is required for his own wants. *But go rather, &c.* This is not to be regarded as an ironical direction, but sincere advice. The wise virgins knew not but that oil could be thus obtained by their companions, in season to join the procession. It is hardly necessary to remark, that this passage furnishes no evidence of the Romish doctrine of works of supererogation. The foolish virgins went indeed to buy oil, but were shut out in consequence thereof from the marriage feast. The circumstance is added, not to teach any



enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and <sup>f</sup> the door was shut.

<sup>f</sup> Lu. 13 : 25. <sup>g</sup> Ch. 7 : 21, 22, 23. <sup>h</sup> Ps. 5 : 5; Hab. 1 : 13; Jn. 9 : 31.

doctrine, but to show how vain will be all efforts to supply previous deficiencies, after the announcement of the bridegroom's approach.

10. *And while they went, &c.* With all their haste, they did not return in season to meet the bridegroom, and unite with the procession. *They that were ready, viz. the wise virgins. Went in with him, &c.* They took part in the procession to the house of the bridegroom's father, and became sharers in the marriage festivities. *To the marriage, i. e. the wedding festival, which generally continued seven days. The door was shut.* This was done in order to prevent intrusion and interruption. These words are often used by way of accommodation, to denote the exclusion of all from the marriage feast of the Lamb, who are not ready to welcome his appearing. Such a use is both pertinent and admissible, and presents a fearful prospect to such as defer repentance, until it is too late to rectify their mistake.

11. *Afterward came also, &c.* After providing themselves with oil, they hastened on to overtake the procession. But before they reached the house, the wedding party had entered in, and the door was shut. They were too late, and all their efforts to repair their mistake in not providing oil for their lamps, had been in vain. *Lord, Lord.* A term of civility like our *Sir*. *Open unto us.* On the strength of their previous invitation to take part in the bridal procession and subsequent feast, they approach the gate with the confident expectation, that it would be opened to them. The repetition of the

11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, <sup>g</sup> Lord, Lord, open to us.

12 But he answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, <sup>h</sup> I know you not.

13 <sup>i</sup> Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the

<sup>i</sup> Ch. 24 : 42, 44; Ma. 13 : 33, 35; Lu. 21 : 36; 1 Co. 16 : 13; 1 Th. 5 : 6; 1 Pe. 5 : 8; Re. 16 : 15.

word *Lord*, is expressive of their earnest desire to enter. As the gate was too remote from the banquet hall for the bridegroom to hear these words, we must suppose them to have been conveyed to him by the porter who kept the gate.

12. *I know you not.* He may have had no personal acquaintance with them, and was therefore unable to distinguish them from impostors; or what is more likely, the expression is a common form of repulsion, indicating that he knew nothing about them, or would have nothing further to do with them. They had failed to take part in the procession. Through their negligence, instead of a full band of virgins with torches, only half had been in attendance. They had done the bridal pair a great dishonor, and therefore richly merited both the exclusion, and the harsh terms in which it was announced. This incident is added, because it was natural to the story, and impressively illustrated the fatal result of negligence, thoughtlessness, and procrastination. We are not, however, to suppose, that it is intended to represent what will actually take place in the spiritual world. After the righteous enter upon their reward in heaven, they will never be interrupted or disturbed by clamorous appeals for admission by false professors and impenitent men. Between them and the wicked will be a great and impassable gulf (Luke 16 : 26), so that neither class can invade the abode of the other, and all intercourse will be broken off for ever.

13. *Watch therefore.* This is the great lesson which our Lord inculcates

hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

14 ¶ <sup>k</sup>For the kingdom of heaven is 'as a man travelling into a

ℓ Lu. 19 : 12.

by the parable. Perhaps there is no portion of God's word, in which the duty of watchfulness, prayer, and an hourly preparation for death, is more impressively set forth. The words, *when the Son of man cometh*, are thought by many good critics to be an addition from copyists to complete the sense. They are not found in several of the best MSS. and old versions. But whether spurious or genuine, they are evidently to be supplied, as appears from 24 : 42, 44, of which they are an emphatic repetition.

14. Our Lord now pronounces a parable, to illustrate the importance of so improving our talents and means for usefulness, that we may be ready to account therefor, at any hour in which he may call us to a reckoning. In the parable of the ten virgins, the simple idea is that of *waiting* in constant readiness for the coming of the bridegroom; and in its spiritual application, the notion of activity and zeal in Christ's cause is rather implied than directly taught. But in the parable of the five talents, active watchfulness is the direct object of inculcation. Drummond well remarks, "as in the parable of the ten virgins, it is the inner life of the believer that is specially set forth there, by their carrying oil in their lamps; so here it is the outward manifestation of that inward life which is set forth, not now in the steady burning of a true profession, but in the faithful discharge of duty to our Master." The words *kingdom of heaven is*, are supplied by our translators. The construction is clear to one acquainted with the original language. Our Lord commences with: *For as a man travelling, &c.* as though he would close the parable with the application, *so shall the Son of man do*. The omission of these words was of no consequence, since every intelligent mind would readily supply them.

far country, *who* called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

15 And unto one he gave five

ℓ Ch. 21 : 33.

*Travelling into a far country*. The word in the original is the same as was employed in 21 : 33, on which see Note. *His own servants*. A more emphatic expression of the relation subsisting between them than simply *his servants*. They were his, and belonged to no one else. His right therefore to the avails of their industry and enterprise, could be disputed by no one. "It is clear from the parable in Luke, that the ten *douloi, servants* (Luke 19 : 13), do not mean all men, or even all Christians indiscriminately, but such as possess a decided qualification for the guidance and government of the church. The mass under this guidance are the citizens." Olshausen. But to argue such a restricted application of the parable, from the fact, that these servants seem to occupy posts of influence and honor—a feature added only to give prominence to their possession of talents, either to use or abuse—would on the like principle of interpretation, limit the words, "kings and priests unto God" (Rev. 1 : 6), to those of high kingly and priestly dignity in the church of Christ, and not to the whole church as is evidently intended. How often do we see the sad results of pressing the subordinate parts of a parable too far, in its application to spiritual truths. *His goods*, i. e. his substance, property. In the spiritual application this represents the treasures of the gospel, the means and opportunity for doing good.

15. *Five talents*. This is put for an indefinitely large sum. It was necessary that a particular amount should be specified, in order to denote the different ability and capacity for business of these servants, by the different sums given to each. *According to his several ability*; more literally, *according to his own ability*. In apportioning his property, the master had reference to each one's ability and capacity to use the money

talents, to another two, and to another one; <sup>m</sup> to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made *them* other five talents.

to the best advantage. This shows that in the spiritual explanation, we are not to regard mental attainments and capacities, as constituting the talents, for these were given in accordance with those powers and attainments. The talents, as was remarked above, are the provisions and treasures of grace, and the means and opportunities of usefulness. Natural advantages whether mental or physical are indeed the gift of God, but those constitute in the parable *each man's several ability*, in reference to which the talents were apportioned to them.

16, 17. *Went forth to business. Traded*; literally, *did business* in the way of trade and traffic. *Made them*. So we employ the phrase *to make money*, i. e. to acquire it in the way of business. The word *them*, is unnecessarily supplied by our translators, as the expression would have been more clear and natural, had they followed the original, *and made besides them five talents. Gained*. The word literally signifies, *acquired by traffic*. No stress is however to be laid upon the kind of business, by which the talents were increased. The simple idea is, that the faithful servants were industriously employed, in using their money to the best advantage.

18. *But he that had received one, &c.* The fact that the servant, who had been intrusted with only one talent proved faithless, is by no means to be taken as proof, that the class of men which he represents are more likely to abuse their talents, than those of superior attainments and capacities for doing good and evil. There is many a sad exemplification of the abuse of talents, in-

17 And likewise he that *had received* two, he also gained other two.

18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19 After a long time the lord

*m* Ro. 12: 6; 1 Co. 12: 7, 11, 29; Ep. 4: 11.

trusted to men of great mental powers and means of usefulness. The one to whom was committed the least amount, seems to have been selected as the worthless one, because it was more natural that he should be displeased at receiving no more, and thus go away sullen and discontented at his lord's partiality to his fellow servants. Our Lord's parables are remarkably natural, and simple, and all their parts are in perfect keeping with the picture taken as a whole. *Digged in the earth, &c.* He did this in order to keep the talent in safe concealment. The class of men represented by this unworthy servant, are by no means to be regarded as the naturally inactive and indolent. They are often the most diligent and enterprising. But in their Master's service, they manifest no energy and industry. They are as worthless to him, as though they slept during their whole lives. Every man, be he ever so active and successful in his worldly pursuits, comes within the class here spoken of, if he does not labor with an eye single to the glory of his Savior and the good of his fellow men.

19. *After a long time.* Ample opportunity was thus given to these servants, for the improvement of the talents intrusted to them. *And reckoneth with them*; literally, *takes up his account with them*. This represents the coming of our Lord to call every person to account, for the manner in which he has improved his opportunities and talents for usefulness. The day of judgment is primarily referred to, but, as has been remarked, a secondary reference may be understood of the hour

of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

21 His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, <sup>n</sup> I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into 'the joy of thy lord.

<sup>n</sup> Ch. 24: 47; ver. 34, 46; Lu. 12: 44, & 22: 29, 30.

of death, when the account of each one is closed up for ever, and the awards of his doings entered upon.

20. *And brought other five talents.* The money had not only been gained by honest industry and enterprise, but was ready to be delivered into his lord's hand, whenever he came. How aptly and beautiful does this represent Christian fidelity and watchfulness.

21-23. *Well done.* An expression of commendation, often employed in the way of applause by the Greeks at their public games. *Good and faithful.* He was upright in his character, and faithful to his lord's interest. *Over a few things*, i. e. while intrusted with things comparatively few and of little value. *I will make thee*, &c. This is antithetic with the preceding clause, and means that the servant should be advanced to a higher post of honor and usefulness. The *few things* refer to earthly toils in Christ's service; the *many things*, to heavenly enjoyments. *Enter thou in*, &c. In the parable this refers to the feast which was given to celebrate the lord's return, and to which the servant was invited. In the application of the parable, it refers to the heavenly rewards, upon which they who are found faithful will enter, when summoned from earth at the hour of death, and especially after the final award at the

VOL. I.—15

22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

23 His lord said unto him, <sup>p</sup> Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said,

<sup>o</sup> He. 12: 2; 2 Ti. 2: 12; 1 Pe. 1: 8.  
<sup>p</sup> Ver. 21.

day of judgment. The word *joy* is here put figuratively for *feast* or *banquet*, the source of enjoyment to such as are invited to be guests. We are to notice that the servant who had received two talents, was addressed in precisely the same terms of commendation, as he who had received five. He had doubled his money, and was therefore equally as faithful, as the one who had received the greater amount.

24. *Then he*, &c. The servant who had received but one talent, was not overlooked in the day of reckoning. In like manner will our Lord call to a strict account every one to whom he has committed talents, whether more or less. *Hard*, i. e. harsh, austere, with the additional idea perhaps from the following context, of being oppressive and exacting, and taking advantage of the poor and unfortunate. *Reaping where thou hast not sown*, &c. These were doubtless proverbial sayings, to represent a hard and griping landlord or master, whose actions were arbitrary and oppressive. The servant in effect said: 'knowing that you were very hardhearted and exacting, and fearing lest through some misfortune in business, I should lose the sum intrusted to me, and thus place myself in your power to do me injury, I carefully laid by your money, and now tender it to you, as all you can reasonably expect



Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed :

25 And I was afraid, and went

or demand of me.' The reply was singularly cool and impudent. *Gathering*, i. e. *harvesting*, if the following verb, *hast strewed*, refers to the scattering of seed in the earth. But this gives it an identity of sense with the preceding clause. It is better therefore to refer *hast strewed*, to the winnowing process of casting grain up to the wind, in order that the chaff may be separated from it (see N. on 3 : 12). The idea then would be, that this hard master would expect to gather up from the winnowing-floor, grain which had not previously been scattered abroad to the wind. The idea of this and the previous clause is not that the lord demanded the fruit of toil and labor, while he himself did nothing, but that such was his hardheartedness, that like Pharaoh of old, he demanded a service impossible of performance. He rigidly exacted every farthing, without considering whether there were not circumstances, which rendered it impossible to meet his demands. How truly this represents the hard thoughts entertained by sinners against the ways of God, needs hardly to be mentioned.

25. *I was afraid* of the consequences, in case I lost the money intrusted to me. *And hid thy talent*. He represents himself so fearful of the oppressive tyranny of his lord, that he took the utmost pains to keep the money safe. It is well said by Olshansen that this servant failed through an unbelieving assumption of his lord's severity, while the guilt of the foolish virgins, proceeded from thoughtless presumption upon the kindness of the bridegroom, so that in this respect the two parables are complements to each other, and describe the two leading temptations of believers in their relation to the Redeemer. But Olshansen greatly errs in the interpretation of these parables, by supposing the foolish virgins

and hid thy talent in the earth : lo, *there* thou hast *that is* thine.

26 His lord answered and said unto him, *Thou* wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest

and the unprofitable servant to represent, not such as have no grace in their heart, but those in whom it is mixed with false views and remissness in duty. The best and most evangelical interpreters unite, in referring the foolish virgins and the unprofitable servant to hypocrites and deceived souls in the church. *Lo, there thou hast that is thine*. The original is more curt and impudent : *lo thou hast thine* ; you can reasonably demand nothing more of me, you have all which you can claim as your own. It is the remark of a writer, that the parable puts a weak excuse into the mouth of the slothful servant, to show that no reasonable apology could be made for such slothful conduct. The reply is certainly expressive to the highest degree of the false and flimsy excuses, which are made by impenitent men for not yielding their hearts to God, not one of which is more common, than that he requires of his creatures what is unreasonable, if not impossible to perform.

26. *Thou wicked and slothful servant* ; literally, *wicked and slothful servant*. For the omission of the pronoun, see N. on 23 : 24. This servant was addressed in terms the very opposite of *good and faithful servant*. In addition to his indolence, he was abusive, envious, and selfish. He had not only disappointed the trust reposed in him by his lord, but sought to excuse his bad conduct by unjust and insolent charges against him. *Thou knewest*, &c. Some read this as an interrogation, *dist thou know*, &c. The sense is the same in either case. Admitting the unjust charge to have been true, there was the more reason that he should have zealously employed himself in endeavoring to increase the talent committed to him. He is condemned therefore on his own showing. The truth of his unjust charge is not admitted as a

that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed :

27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and *then* at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give *it* unto him which hath ten talents.

q Ch. 13 : 12 ; Ma. 4 : 25 ; Lu. 8 : 18, & 19 : 26 ; Jn. 15 : 2. r Ch. 8 : 12, & 24 : 51.

reality, but only for the sake of confounding him with his own false and frivolous excuse.

27. *Thou oughtest therefore.* On your own ground of justification, that I would call you to the strictest account for the use of the money with which you were intrusted, you ought to have taken the more care to have restored to me my own with usury. *Exchangers*, i. e. brokers, bankers, who not only exchanged money, but received it on deposit with interest. This wicked servant, therefore, had he chosen not to risk his money in merchandise, could have loaned it to these bankers, and thus have obtained interest, which would have been preferable to burying it in the earth. *Mine own* (literally, *the mine*), i. e. the talent committed to thee. *With usury.* The word *usury* (from Lat. *usura*, a using, use, or enjoyment of a thing, and figuratively, *interest*), did not originally have the bad sense now attached to it, but denoted lawful interest. Had the slothful servant, therefore, simply put the money out on interest, there would have accrued to his lord some profit ; but as it was, he could only pay back the bare sum originally intrusted to him.

28. *Take therefore the talent.* These words may be supposed to have been addressed to the attendants or head servants. *Give it unto him*, &c. This was done as a further token of favor. The improvement of the talents com-

29 <sup>9</sup> For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance : but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

31 ¶ <sup>9</sup> When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all

s Zec. 14 : 5 ; Ch. 16 : 27, & 19 : 28 ; Ma. 8 : 38 ; Ac. 1 : 11 ; 1 Th. 4 : 16 ; 2 Th. 1 : 7 ; Jude 14 ; Re. 1 : 7.

mitted to him, showed his fitness to be intrusted with more of his lord's possessions. Thus it is in the spiritual world. The righteous shall inherit all things (Ps. 37 : 29) ; while the wicked, who have abused their talents and privileges, shall be stripped of every blessing, and be poor, and miserable, and wretched for ever (Rev. 3 : 17).

29. This proverbial expression was employed in 13 : 12 (on which see N.), but in a different connection. The general sentiment is, however, the same, viz. that the proper use of gifts and privileges will always be rewarded by new acts of munificence on the part of the giver, while from him who abuses his trust, shall be taken away even that which was intrusted to him.

30. *And cast ye, &c.* Not only was the slothful servant to be stripped of all he had, but he was doomed to be punished, as an expression of his lord's detestation of his conduct, and as a warning to others against imitating his example. *Unprofitable* ; literally, *useless*, worthless, bad. *Outer darkness.* See N. on 22 : 13. *There shall be weeping, &c.* See N. on 8 : 12.

31-46. We come now to the consideration of a passage, which is one of the most awful and sublime, of any that was ever presented to the human mind. It refers so evidently to the JUDGMENT OF THE LAST DAY, that no critic of any note has presumed to give it any other reference. The simple,

the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory :

concise, dignified language in which it is narrated, and the directness with which it brings before the mind the scenes of the last judgment, furnishes the most conclusive evidence that what was said in the preceding chapter, at least so far as v. 43, referred to a previous and subordinate advent of our Lord. Unless we adopt this general division of his discourse, and regard the transition from the signs and warnings of his coming to destroy Jerusalem, to the still greater watchfulness and diligence with which his coming to judgment was to be awaited, as being well marked, so that what was said of the former coming, was in no danger of being confounded by his disciples with what was said of the latter, we shall find ourselves in doubt and perplexity, as to the true meaning of many portions of the prophecy, and fail to derive the lessons of instruction which we might otherwise obtain from it. It is to be noticed, that our Lord fully and distinctly disclosed the signs of his coming to take vengeance upon the Jews, so that his followers should know when to flee to the mountains, from the horrors and calamities of the siege. But not a sign was given, by which might be known the time of his approach to judgment. No sights in the heavens, or commotions on earth, are revealed as the precursors of that great and awful event. The future in reference thereto is veiled in impenetrable darkness. The only direction given in relation to it, may be comprised in the single term *watchfulness*. This is enforced under the similitude of a man vigilantly guarding his house against the midnight robber (24: 43-45), the wise servant who watched continually for his master's coming (24: 46-51), the prudent virgins who were in a constant state of readiness to meet the bridegroom (25: 1-13), and the faithful servants who diligently improved the talents committed to their care (14: 30). All these illustrations are based on one

great fact, that this final coming of our Lord will be preceded by no sign, which will enable the slothful to make amends for previous remissness, as would have been the case, had the foolish virgins been warned of the near approach of the bridegroom. In this respect, therefore, the coming of our Lord to judgment widely differs from his coming to destroy Jerusalem, which was preceded by signs betokening his near approach. As it respects this passage, we are to regard it as a veritable portraiture, a grand outline view of the scenes and transactions of the last day, and not, as some recent critics strangely assert, a mere parabolic enforcement of the duty of acts of kindness towards others, drawn from a supposed day of final adjudication, in which the sentence of approval or condemnation is made to hinge on the manner in which those who are to be judged have performed their duties to their fellow men. It has none of the essential features of a parable, but bears on its face irresistible evidence of being a veritable transaction.

31. *When the Son of man, &c.* In connection with the majesty and grandeur of his appearance on this great and awful occasion, our Lord speaks of himself as the Son of man. It is not in his divine character alone, that he is to act as final Judge, but as God manifest in the flesh, the humble, despised Jesus of Nazareth. See N. on 16: 17. Hence we see the reason, why the Father is said to have committed all judgment to the Son (John 5: 22). As Mediator he is officially subordinate to the Father, and his office as final Judge is a delegated and not an independent one. *In his glory*, i. e. the glory which belongs to him as Messiah. He comes in royal state to reward his friends, and execute vengeance upon his enemies (compare Ex. 24: 16, 17). *And all the holy angels with him* (see Mark 8: 38). What a retinue! It would appear from 1 Thess. 4: 16, 17, that the pious dead, together with believers who shall then

## 32 And 'before him shall be

† Ro. 14 : 10 ; 2 Co. 5 : 10 ; Re. 20 : 12.

be alive upon the earth, shall rise first, and be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and thus to the wicked who shall be raised afterwards, they will appear to come to judgment (Jude 14, 15) as a part of our Lord's glorious retinue. May not this be the key to the first resurrection spoken of in Rev. 20 : 5, 6? As it regards the similarity of the description of this final appearance of our Lord, with that of his previous advent to destroy Jerusalem (24 : 30, 31), it is so marked and unmistakable, that it is perfectly admissible, as Doddridge well observes, to employ those texts, when we are discoursing upon this great and awful day. His appearance to destroy Jerusalem was symbolical of his final appearance, and hence the resemblance of the language in which both his comings are described. *Shall sit as judge. Throne of his glory*, i. e. his glorious throne. The language is borrowed from the pomp and splendor, with which Oriental monarchs appeared on great state occasions. See Dan. 7 : 9 ; Isa. 6 : 1.

32. *Before him*. Into his presence. *Shall be gathered all nations*, i. e. all people who have lived on the earth, both Jews and Gentiles. I cannot agree with Alford, Stier, and Olshausen, who refer this to the nations, as distinguished from the elect or covenanted servants of Christ, who according to their theory have previously been raised and judged, and are already in his glory, and judging the world with him. But as the very idea of the judgment of these nations implies that *not all are to be condemned*, Alford supposes that some of this multitude had performed deeds of love, which they knew not "had been done to and for Christ, and hence they are overwhelmed with the sight of the grace, which has been working in and for them, and the glory which is now their blessed portion." This commentator supposes therefore that besides the elect, there are good persons in the world, and that these are the ones who now stand at the Judge's

gathered all nations: and "he

u Ez. 20 : 38, & 34 : 17, 20 ; Ch. 13 : 49.

right hand. His error results in mistaken views of the first resurrection, not only in confounding it with the millennial dispensation, but in identifying it with the final judgment and reward of the righteous (i. e. the elect), "in which *all Christians* shall be judged." Having thus disposed of the elect (i. e. Christians), there remains no class of persons to compose the sheep on the right hand of the Judge, but those who are "not the covenanted servants of Christ," and "who knew not that all their deeds of love had been done to and for Christ," that is, if I do not greatly misunderstand this in many respects most excellent and accurate commentator (whose theory of eschatology does not materially differ from that of Olshausen), *the good* who may be found at last to have lived in the midst of heathenism, and whose "love felt its way, though in darkness, to Him who is love." This view I cannot adopt, both because it is manifestly opposed to the great idea of Scripture, that there is one appointed day in which all mankind will be judged in righteousness (Acts 17 : 31), and because the whole tenor of Scripture and the experience of our missionaries is against the idea, that there are persons to be found among the heathen, who give such evidence of piety and purity of heart, as to warrant the belief that they will be saved without the knowledge of Christ. This separation of the good and bad, indicated by their local position on the right and left of the Judge, and by the terms of the final sentence, show that *all* the former as well as the latter class are to be assembled on this occasion, and not a mere handful composed of the good that may have been gathered in from the heathen, who have never heard of Christ. We cannot believe that the righteous who are to go into "life eternal," and who are placed in direct and open contrast with the wicked consigned now to "everlasting punishment," consist of only a few good men, who have maintained something of a virtuous character,



shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats :

33 And he shall set the sheep

on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come,

amidst the vices and degradation of heathenism? The sentence evidently includes all the good and bad, that have ever lived or will live upon the earth. Besides it is altogether improbable, if not morally impossible, that after the millennial dispensation, in which, as Alford maintains, all the elect or Christians are to be judged, the knowledge of Christ will so depart from the earth, that no Christians shall afterwards live thereon to be judged at the final judgment. Who are those saints, and what has become of them, in defence of whom, fire is to come down from heaven and destroy the armies of Gog and Magog, immediately after which, the devil that deceived them is to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone? (Rev. 20 : 8-10.) Does this appear consonant with the theory, that after the marriage supper of the Lamb, which Alford and others identify with the millennial period, the knowledge of Christ will so depart from the earth, that there shall be no Christians living thereon to be judged at the last day? These are some of the considerations to which many others might be added, why the interpretation of Alford, Olshausen, and others of that school, cannot be accepted as the true one. The expression *all nations*, seems to have been used by our Lord in opposition to an ancient notion of the Jews, that the Gentiles would have no part in the resurrection. As it regards the angelic instrumentality in assembling the human race to judgment, compare 13 : 14 ; Mark 8 : 32 ; 2 Thess. 1 : 7. *And he shall separate*, &c. See 13 : 41. This is to be done by the ministry of angels. Actions are rightly attributed to the one at whose command they were performed. As this separation implies knowledge of character, the angels who performed it, are endowed with powers requisite to its right execution. *One from another*. In the same families and groups, as they

arise from their burial places, will be found mingled together, the good and the bad. But a separation now takes place. One shall pass to the right hand of the Judge, and another by his side, shall be hurried to his station on the left. Husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, will be parted asunder, according as they have been friends or enemies of the Judge, before whom they are to appear. *As a shepherd*, &c. What omniscience and power thus to arrange on his right and left hand, the thousands of millions of the human race, with as much ease and accuracy, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. *A shepherd*; literally, *the shepherd*, a generic expression.

33. *And he shall set*, &c. Sheep are here chosen to represent the righteous, because of their innocence and harmlessness, and their being objects of the tenderest care to the shepherd. See 18 : 12, 13 ; John 10 : 11, 14. *On the right hand* &c. This arrangement is thought to be based on what is asserted of the custom in judicial trials, of having two secretaries, one on the right hand of the judge, to write the sentence of acquittal, the other on the left, to write the one of condemnation. Reference may be had, however, to the well-known and universal fact, that the right hand is the post of honor. In the way of antithesis, the left hand would then be the place of dishonor. See Eccles. 10 : 2. When no such antithesis exists, the left may be included with the right as a post of honor. See 20 : 21.

34. *Then shall the King*. Christ is here acting in the capacity of king, as well as judge. He is about to reward his friends and take vengeance on his enemies. His Mediatorial kingdom is now to be confirmed by his triumph over every foe. Death and hell are to be cast into a lake of fire (Rev. 20 : 14), and the righteous are to enter in full possession upon their everlasting rest.

ye blessed of my Father, <sup>1</sup>inherit the kingdom <sup>2</sup>prepared for you from the foundation of the world :

35 <sup>1</sup>For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat : I was

<sup>a</sup> Ro. 8 : 17 ; 1 Pe. 1 : 4, 9, & 3 : 9 ; Re. 21 : 7.  
<sup>y</sup> Ch. 20 : 23 ; Ma. 10 : 40 ; 1 Co. 2 : 9 ; He. 11 : 16.

In ancient times the kingly and judicial power was united. *Come* is not to be taken in a local sense (i. e. of a change of place), but is an expression of encouragement and incitement, often used with commands and exhortations. *Ye blessed of my Father.* They had been given to Christ by his Father (John 6 : 37), and it was his Father's will that of those which had been given him, not one should be lost, but all should be raised up at the last day (John 6 : 39). In the divine arrangement, they had been chosen to everlasting life by the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit (2 Thess. 2 : 13 ; 1 Pet. 1 : 2), and were therefore the objects of his unceasing love (1 John 3 : 1). *Inherit.* The idea is one of heirship. See Rom. 8 : 17 ; Gal. 3 : 29 ; Heb. 1 : 14 ; James 2 : 5 ; Rev. 21 : 7. *The kingdom,* i. e. the bliss of heaven, eternal life, the perfected blessings of the Messiah's kingdom (Luke 12 : 32). *Prepared for you.* This enhances his love for the righteous, that, long before their personal existence, seats of glory had been provided for them, in the councils of God, upon which they were now to enter. This shows that their salvation was all of divine, sovereign grace, and that having been chosen to such seats of bliss, they would never be forsaken of him and suffered to perish (see John 10 : 27-29 ; Acts 13 : 48 ; Rom. 8 : 28-39).

35. *For I was an hungered.* The duty of almsgiving is here put as the type or representative of all the Christian virtues, both on account of its intrinsic importance and excellence, and, as Doddridge thinks, because from the Chaldee paraphrase on Eccles. 9 : 7, the Jews supposed that almsgiving would be remembered with peculiar regard at the day of judgment. Perhaps this Christian grace was selected, be-

thirsty, and ye gave me drink :  
<sup>a</sup> I was a stranger and ye took me in :

36 <sup>b</sup> Naked, and ye clothed me :  
I was sick, and ye visited me : <sup>c</sup> I

<sup>z</sup> Is. 58 : 7 ; Ez. 18 : 7 ; Ja. 1 : 27. <sup>a</sup> He. 13 : 2,  
3 ; Jo. 5. <sup>b</sup> Ja. 2 : 15, 16. <sup>c</sup> 2 Ti. 1 : 16.

cause it furnished an occasion for the Judge to proclaim in hearing of the assembled universe, the intimate union existing between him and his people, so that the acts of kindness shown to them, were virtually shown to him (10 : 40 ; 18 : 5 ; Mark 9 : 37). This trial of benevolence indicated their possession of the spirit of Christ (Rom. 8 : 9), and their consequent fitness to be received into his everlasting favor. It was not necessary that alms and other kind offices should be bestowed upon our Savior in person. It was sufficient that they had been rendered to his poor, humble, persecuted followers, who had nothing to recommend them but their pure and devoted attachment to their Lord. *I was thirsty.* In Oriental countries where water was scarce, it was a grateful and sometimes an essential act of kindness, to give a cup of cold water to the thirsty traveller (see John 4 : 7).

36. *A stranger.* Belonging to another place or country. *Took me in ;* literally, *conducted me into* your house, and bestowed upon me the rites of hospitality. This with the ancients was regarded as a cardinal virtue (Heb. 13 : 2). *Naked and ye clothed me.* This is an advance on the preceding act of hospitality. The word rendered *naked*, does not mean absolute nudity, but is used of one who, as we say, is half naked, or poorly clad. *Ye visited me,* or more literally, *ye looked after me.* You took charge of me, and saw that I received necessary care and attention (see James 1 : 27). *I was in prison.* A still more prominent circumstance of distress, as the preceding state of sickness was an advance on nakedness. The climax is well marked in these gradations of suffering and want. He was in prison, unjustly charged with

was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

*d* Pr. 14 : 31, & 19 : 17 ; Ch. 10 : 42 ; Ma. 9 : 41 ;  
He. 6 : 10.

crime, and about to suffer an ignominious punishment. But the hand of Christian charity was there extended to him. He was sought out and visited in the cold and loathsome dungeon. The shame and obloquy incurred in administering to the wants of a poor despised criminal, were lost in the deep and all-absorbing love, which embraced in its arms of benevolent compassion every son and daughter of affliction. *Ye came unto me* to administer in person to my wants, and comfort me with your sympathy.

37. *Then shall the righteous, &c.* They express their astonishment at these words of the Judge. They can remember no instance, when they conferred these acts of kindness upon their Lord. Their reply is therefore a modest disclaimer of worthiness on the ground here mentioned. It is as though they said: 'It cannot be, Lord, that thou art under such obligations to us, for we never saw thee in such circumstances of distress, and could therefore never have done thee such services as thou hast enumerated.' What condescension and love on the one hand, and modest, humble demeanor on the other, does this incident of the last judgment furnish. It is unnecessary to suppose, that these words will be actually spoken by the righteous. It may be the language of their heart, known, however, to the omniscient eye of the Judge, and here revealed to us as the expression of their feelings. It is strange that this should be lost sight of by Olshausen, Alford, and others, and

39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, <sup>d</sup>Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, 'Depart

*e* Ps. 6 : 8 ; Ch. 7 : 23 ; Lu. 13 : 27.

that they should find in this reply nothing, but a simple profession of ignorance on the part of these righteous persons, of the name or existence of Christ, showing that they were gathered in from heathen lands.

40. *One of the least of these*, i. e. the most humble, necessitous, and despised of his followers. The idea is in a measure reflexive, *one of the least of your own number. My brethren.* So Christ denominated his followers, while on earth (see 12 : 49 ; 28 : 10 ; Mark 3 : 35 ; Luke 8 : 31 ; John 12 : 17), and this endearing term bestowed upon them, when he sits on the throne of judgment, shows how abiding is his love, as well as wondrous his condescension. *Ye have done it, &c.* This should excite all Christ's followers to acts of kindness and love. Every instance of self-denial for the temporal or spiritual welfare of others, is regarded by our Savior as done to Him, and will receive his public approval and acknowledgment at the last day. See 10 : 40.

41. *Then shall he say, &c.* The righteous having been thus honored and confirmed in their everlasting inheritance, the Judge proceeds to pass sentence upon the wicked who stand on his left hand. *Depart from me, ye cursed, &c.* This sentence is the very opposite of that, which had been passed upon the righteous. The persons thus doomed had no moral resemblance to Christ. They were strangers to his spirit and temper (Rom. 8 : 9). His invitations of love and mercy they had slighted. His commands they had

from me, ye cursed, <sup>f</sup>into everlasting fire, prepared for <sup>g</sup>the devil and his angels :

42 For I was an hungered, and

<sup>f</sup>Ch. 13 : 40, 42.

broken. Now he banishes them from his presence. *Ye cursed*, i. e. accursed ones, doomed to punishment. The omission of the words *of my Father*, which follow the word *blessed* in v. 34, is noticeable, as showing that the condemnation or accursed condition of the wicked, results from their own evil doing, while the salvation of the righteous is all of grace. *Into everlasting fire*. See N. on 5 : 22. This does not necessarily imply material fire, but as that is the source of the most exquisite suffering to our mortal bodies, it is chosen as the symbol of those dreadful torments, to which the wicked are to be for ever shut up in the world of woe. We do not diminish the severity of those torments by excluding the idea of physical fire, but enhance it by making suffering by fire an emblem falling far below the reality. The nature and extent of these sufferings of the lost, are beyond our comprehension. From the terrific imagery made use of in God's word, no one can doubt that they are dreadful beyond conception. From what we see sometimes in this world, and from the very nature of sin, we may infer that the body and soul, united at the resurrection, will have raging desires, passions, and appetites which will never be gratified ; that they will be shut up with wicked and loathsome fiends, accursed of God, and hated as the instigators to evil ; that there will be a malignant desire to torment one another, and that there will be such clear convictions of sin and ill desert, that the soul will be torn with self-reproach, remorse, and despair. But in addition to all this, will be the direct infliction of the wrath of God. Who can form any idea of this dispensation of wrath ? Who knoweth the power of his anger (Ps. 90 : 11) ? Who can abide his displeasure, which is a consuming fire (Heb. 12 : 29) to all who have not taken re-

ye gave me no meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink :

43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in : naked, and ye

<sup>g</sup> 2 Pe. 2 : 4 ; Jude 6.

fuge in his Son Jesus Christ ? *Everlasting*. See N. on v. 46. *Prepared for the devil*, &c. See N. on 9 : 34. The seats of bliss had been prepared for the righteous from the foundation of the world ; but the abode of the lost had been prepared for the devil and his angels. God would have all men come to him and be saved. Salvation through his Son has been provided for all. But those who choose death instead of life, and show themselves the incorrigible enemies of God, are consigned to the same place of punishment, as that which has been prepared for the angels, which kept not their first estate (Jude 6). They who seek to parry off the force of this dreadful passage against the doctrine of universal salvation, assert that hell was not the place originally designed for man, and therefore cannot be regarded as his everlasting habitation. But does not the phrase *devil and his angels*, include, as Bloomfield well remarks, the incorrigibly wicked of every age ? Is there any ground of hope that the punishment of the wicked will have an end, because they are sentenced to a place, where are confined the most powerful and malignant of God's enemies ? The very reverse of this would seem to be taught in this awful passage.

42, 43. The same test of character is made the rule of judgment, in respect to those on the left hand, as had been employed in regard to the righteous. Impartial justice will be meted out to all. There is no variation in the words spoken to these two classes, except in the employment of the negative, in the second member of each sentence addressed to the wicked, and the more condensed expression, "sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not," for "I was sick and ye visited me, I was in prison and ye came unto me," the form addressed to the righteous.

44, 45. *Then shall they*, &c. How



clothed me not : sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee ?

h Pr. 14 : 31, & 17 : 5 ; Zec. 2 : 8 ; Ac. 9 : 5.

different their spirit of self-exculpation, from the humility and sense of unworthiness manifested by the righteous. These wicked persons had never in their whole lives exhibited any love to Christ or his people. Yet they imagine that because they had not treated him with personal neglect, having had no opportunity of doing so, they are guiltless of the charge here brought against them. But as the Judge disabused the righteous of the wrong views which they entertained of their unworthiness, so he now shows the wicked how false were their pretensions of kindness to him. *Least of these* refers here, as in v. 40, to the righteous.

46. *Shall go away* from the presence of the Judge. They could make no reply to the charge of having neglected the poor and despised followers of Christ. Every mouth was stopped (Rom. 3 : 19), and the justice of their sentence acknowledged. *Everlasting punishment*. The word here translated *everlasting*, is the same as that which is translated *eternal* in the next clause. It is greatly to be regretted, that our translators did not render the original by the same word in both instances. Whatever may be said about the meaning of the Greek word *aionion*, it must, by all the laws of interpretation and common sense, have the same signification in both clauses. *Everlasting punishment* is here set over against *everlasting life*, and if the one is of finite duration, so must be the other. But no one denies that the doctrine of endless felicity in heaven, is fully and explicitly taught in the Bible. If so, then *everlasting life* means that which has no end, and the same must be true of the

45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, <sup>h</sup> Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.

46 And <sup>i</sup> these shall go away

<sup>i</sup> Da. 12 : 2 ; Jn. 5 : 29 ; Ro. 2 : 7, &c.

antithetic words, *everlasting punishment*. There is no evading this result. Were the doctrine of future and endless punishment taught nowhere else in the Bible, this single passage would establish its truth beyond the possibility of doubt or contradiction. But how is this dreadful truth confirmed by other texts in God's word, as well as by the very nature and necessity of Christ's death. Let no one refuse to receive this doctrine on the ground of its being harsh, cruel, and repugnant to every humane feeling. The words we are here considering are those of our compassionate Savior, who gave his life to save us from so dreadful a doom. He did not employ this language to frighten the timid, or harrow up the feelings of the tenderhearted. He uttered a solemn truth in circumstances, which ought to render it one of the most powerful incitements to flee from the wrath to come, ever addressed to man.

In respect to the etymological meaning of the word *aionion*, the ground signification is *always being*. When applied to human existence it denotes the whole period of one's life. In like manner, when it is used of a dispensation, age, or period of the world, it signifies the *whole* of that age or period. So when applied to the *eternity past* it designates, so to speak, the *whole* of that eternity (see 2 Tim. 1 : 9 ; Tit. 1 : 2 ; 1 Cor. 2 : 7), in the same manner as *aion*, from which it is derived, signifies *eternity past* in Eph. 3 : 11. When it is employed also as an attribute of the *eternity to come*, it denotes the *whole* of that eternity. It is the *always being* of that state, condition, or existence

into everlasting punishment : but the righteous into life eternal.

which is entered upon, and thus stamped with the seal of eternity. This fundamental meaning of the word, and its application as here given, cannot be disputed. Now, in reference to which of these periods of eternity must the meaning of this word be taken, as here used by Christ? Evidently in the sense of an ALWAYS BEING punishment of the wicked, and an ALWAYS BEING life of the righteous, in THE ETERNITY TO COME. This is plain and incontrovertible. It is wonderful that any one of even moderate philological attainments, should have the hardihood to contend, that *aionion* has in this passage the meaning of limited duration.

But this etymological signification of the word is confirmed by its general usage in the New Testament. It is employed sixty-six times. Of these, in fifty-one instances, it is used of the happiness of the righteous, in two, of God's existence, in six, of the church and the Messiah's kingdom, and in the remaining seven, of the future punishment of the wicked. If in these seven instances we attach to the word the idea of limited duration, consistency requires that the same idea of limited duration should be given it, in the fifty-one cases of its application to the future glory of the righteous, and the two instances of its application to God's existence, and the six cases of its appropriation to the future reign of the Messiah, and the glory and perpetuity of the church. But no one will presume to deny, that in these instances it denotes unlimited duration, and therefore in accordance with the sound laws of interpretation, and of language itself, the same sense of unlimited duration must be given it when used of future punishment.

In regard to the word *punishment*, as used in this verse, it does not signify a mere negation of happiness or enjoyment, or a mere state or condition, but

## CHAPTER XXVI.

AND it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these

the positive infliction of punishment (see Acts 4 : 21) from God. See N. on v. 41. *Eternal life*. See N. on 19 : 16. It has been well remarked, by Alford, that *life* does not here mean bare *existence*, which would have *annihilation* for its opposite; but *blessedness* and *reward*, to which *punishment* and *misery* are antagonistic terms.

## CHAP. XXVI.

1-16. THE CONSPIRACY OF THE RULERS ; SUPPER AT BETHANY ; AND TREACHERY OF JUDAS. *Jerusalem. Bethany*. Fifth day of the Week. Mark 14 : 1-11 ; Luke 22 : 1-6.

1. *All these sayings* contained especially in the two preceding chapters. His public teaching had now come to a close. What he said afterwards was addressed in private to his disciples.

2. *After two days*. This shows that they had now entered upon the fifth day of the week, or on our Thursday. But as the Jewish day began with the preceding evening, it may have been on their way to the feast at Bethany (see v. 6), on Wednesday evening, that he made this announcement to his disciples. *Feast of the passover* ; literally, *the paschal feast*. This was the feast of unleavened bread, commencing with the paschal supper, and continuing seven days, until the close of the 21st day of Nisan (April). It was instituted in commemoration of the Hebrew liberation from Egyptian bondage, and of the preservation of their first born on the night, when the first born of Egypt were destroyed by the angel of the Lord. On the 10th day of the month Nisan, the master of a family separated a yearling ram or goat (Ex. 12 : 1-6), which he killed on the 14th day between the two evenings (see N. on 14 : 15), before the altar, upon the bottom of which the blood was sprinkled. In Egypt, where the event to be commemorated occurred, the blood was sprinkled upon the door post (Ex. 12 : 7). This ram

sayings, he said unto his disciples,

2 <sup>a</sup>Ye know that after two days is *the feast of the passover*,

<sup>a</sup> Ma. 14: 1; Lu. 22: 1; Jn. 13: 1.

or kid, denominated *pascha* (protection), was roasted whole with two spits thrust through the body, the one longitudinally, the other transversely, near the fore legs, so that the animal was in a manner crucified, a most significant circumstance, which was little deemed by those who thus impaled the animal, as symbolical of the crucifixion of the Lamb of God, of which the whole paschal sacrifice was an emblem (1 Cor. 5: 7). The oven in which the animal was roasted, was an excavation, two and a half feet in diameter, and from five to six feet in depth. The bottom being paved with stones, from these, when sufficiently heated, the fire was removed, and the animal to be roasted was placed thereon, and the mouth of the oven was then shut. When thus roasted, it was eaten with a salad of wild and bitter herbs. Not fewer than ten or more than twenty persons were admitted to these sacred feasts. At first the passover was eaten with loins girt about, shoes on the feet, and all the preparations for an immediate journey, but this was not the case afterwards. The Jews, however, always obeyed the command not to break a bone of the offering (compare Ex. 12: 46; John 19: 36).

Dr. Jahn remarks that the ceremonies practised at the eating of the paschal feast, were much the same as those of the present day. The master of the family having broken the bread, blessed it, and divided it among those who partook of the feast. Preceding and following this act or part of the feast, was the partaking of a cup of wine. The third cup drunk on the occasion was termed *the cup of benediction*. This was, doubtless, the one employed by our Savior in his institution of the Lord's supper (see v. 27; 1 Cor. 10: 16). After this cup had been passed, songs of praise were sung, viz. Ps. 115-

and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

3 <sup>b</sup>Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and

<sup>b</sup> Ps. 2: 2; Jn. 11: 47; Ac. 4: 25, &c.

118. This was imitated by Jesus and his disciples, who sang a hymn at the close before they went out (see v. 30). On the second day of the passover (i. e. the 16th of Nisan), a sheaf of barley was offered up, and a lamb of a year old for a burnt offering, also a meat offering and a libation. On every day of the Paschal week, there were more than the usual number of sacrificial victims and sin offerings.

*And the Son of man, &c.* Our Lord now declares the exact time of his betrayal to be crucified. The word rendered *and*, is susceptible of the translation *and then*, which answers better the demands of the passage. *To be crucified*. He foretells again (see 20: 19) the kind of death he was to suffer.

3. *Then*, i. e. on the second day before the passover. *The chief priests, &c.* This was the Jewish Sanhedrim, the members of which had become so exasperated by our Lord's exposure of their hypocrisy, and by the dreadful woes he had pronounced upon them in the temple, that they now assembled in full council, to plan his death in such a manner as to be screened from the resentment of the people, who were persuaded that Jesus was a true prophet. *The palace*; literally, *an open enclosure*, frequently used for the *exterior court* or yard of a building, or for the *interior court*, such as is in the middle of Eastern houses. As such edifices were large and spacious, it was often used to denote a *man-sion* or *palace*. So we employ the word *hall*, to denote a large baronial edifice, because such buildings were provided with wide and spacious halls. *Caiaphas*. He was the son-in-law of Annas, who had been high priest from A. D. 8, to A. D. 14 or 15. Caiaphas was appointed to this office, A. D. 26, by Valerius Grattus, the predecessor of Pilate, and held it until deposed by

the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,

4 And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill *him*.

c Ma. 14: 3; Jn. 11: 1, 2, & 12: 8.

Vitellius, A.D. 35. He was, therefore, the actual high priest at the time of our Lord's crucifixion, although Annas is also thus called (Acts 4: 6), because of his having formerly borne the office, and his near relationship to Caiaphas. The office, which at first was hereditary, was in the time of Christ held merely at the pleasure of the Roman procurators. Between Annas and Caiaphas, there were three who had held the office, Imai, Eleazer, and Simon.

4. *And consulted.* This was a secret consultation, and they therefore assembled at the palace of the high priest, and not according to the usual custom at the temple. *Might take.* This refers to a forcible seizure. *By subtilty.* This was their only resource. They had endeavored to entrap him by crafty and perplexing questions. They had watched in vain for some word or action, by which they might accuse him to the Roman governor, as a seditious person, or to the people, as one who leaned towards Roman interests, and had no sympathy for their oppressed condition. He must be removed at all hazards, and no way appeared more feasible, than to get him into their power, and charge him with some pretended crime. This was the plan concocted and decided upon at this meeting.

5. *But they said.* These words were probably uttered by some leading member, and concurred in by the others. *Not on the feast day.* The ellipsis fully supplied would be: *let not this be done at the time of the festival.* Although these great festivals were the occasions chosen for the execution of notorious criminals, yet the Sanhedrim feared to proceed thus in the case of Jesus. They had not forgotten the

5 But they said, Not on the feast *day*, lest there be an uproar among the people.

6 ¶ Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,

d Ch. 21: 17.

hosannas of the multitude, and had good reason to fear that many, if not all the people who thronged the city at that time, would unite to rescue from their hands a man, held in such esteem and reverence on account of his miracles, doctrines, and blameless life. *Uproar*, i. e. a popular tumult or commotion. Any one who reads the history of the Jewish wars by Josephus, will see how frequent and violent were these tumults and seditions, from this time onward to the destruction of Jerusalem.

6. *Now when Jesus, &c.* Some difficulty has been experienced in harmonizing the time of this supper at Bethany, with the same supper spoken of by John (12: 2-8), as taking place six days before the passover. The circumstances attending the supper show clearly, that the same entertainment is referred to by all the evangelists. But from the fact that Judas, through sudden resentment at the rebuke he received from his Master during the supper (see vs. 8-14: Mark 14: 4-10; John 12: 4-8), conceived the design of betraying Jesus, and, as appears from Matthew's account (see v. 14), put it into execution immediately after the supper, it would seem very clear that it took place, according to the order of events specified in Matthew and Mark. This would be more natural, than to suppose Judas to have formed this determination at an early part of the week, and yet to have delayed its execution until several days afterward, although having such abundant opportunity to carry it into effect, while Christ was teaching in the temple, and returning each night to some secluded place on Mount Olivet, for concealment from his enemies. The act



7 There came unto him a woman having an alabaster-box of very precious ointment, and

poured it on his head, as he sat at meat.

8 <sup>e</sup> But when his disciples saw

<sup>e</sup> *Jn. 12 : 4.*

of Judas seems also to have been done through sudden resentment, which would have subsided, had several days elapsed before he carried it into execution, as is evident from his remorse, and self-destruction, when he saw what he had done to his innocent Lord and Master. The natural impression made upon the common reader is, that Judas went with his proposal of treachery to the chief priests, after they had determined in secret council to put him to death. These things conspire to show that John anticipated the time of the supper, as Dr. Robinson well remarks, "in order there to bring together and complete all that he had to say further of Bethany, which he mentions no more." It is proper to remark that Doddridge, Bloomfield, Barnes, Alford, and some others reconcile this disagreement of time, on the contrary, by supposing it to be narrated in Matthew and Mark out of its place, in order to connect it with the account of Judas' treachery, which grew out of it.

*In the house of Simon the leper.* He had been a leper, and probably was cured by our Lord. He was therefore distinguished by this surname, as Matthew was called the publican, from his having been one. John (12 : 2) says that Martha served at this supper, and that Lazarus was one of the guests. This seems to indicate of itself that the supper was not at the house of that family, as some suppose, who think that a different entertainment is referred to by John from that in Matthew and Mark. It is evident, however, that the families were on such intimate terms, that Martha assisted at the supper both as a friendly act, and to show her love for her Lord and Master.

7. *Came unto him,* as he was reclining at the table (see N. on 23 : 6). *A woman.* According to John (12 : 3) she was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. The same characteristics of the

two sisters are seen here, which displayed themselves on a former occasion (Luke 10 : 38-42), only that Martha appears in more softened and amiable colors. She is however the same active, watchful, careful housekeeper, having an eye on every thing adapted to make the feast worthy of her Lord, to whom she was under such obligations. Mary's heart too, was overflowing with love to Jesus, and she took occasion to publicly express it in a way accordant with that gentle, loving, trustful spirit, which she had given evidence before of having possessed, when she sat at Jesus' feet, and chose the "good part," which could never be taken from her. *An alabaster box.* It was so called, because at first made of a species of marble called *onyx*, from being the color of the human nail. Vases for unguents or perfumes were afterwards called by this name, although manufactured of any material, as glass, gold, stone. These vases were in the form of vials with long necks, and hence Mark says, that the woman brake the vase, i. e. its neck. *Very precious ointment.* Mark and John call it *ointment of spikenard*, which was regarded by the ancients as the most precious of ointments. It was extracted from a plant called *nard*, from its blossom being shaped like an ear of corn. It was an oil rather than an unguent, and hence Mary is said to have poured it upon her Savior's head. John says that she anointed his feet. There is no disagreement. She probably anointed both head and feet, and as Matthew and Mark had spoken only of the former, John who wrote afterwards, in order to make the narration complete, speaks of her having applied the ointment to his feet. John also says that there was a pound of this ointment. The Roman pound was equivalent to about twelve ounces avoirdupois weight. This, as well as the high value put upon it by Judas

*it*, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose *is* this waste?

9 For this ointment might have

(see Mark 14 : 5 ; John 12 : 5), shows that the quantity was large as well as the quality good. *As he sat*, i. e. reclined. Their posture at meals rendered such an act as this easy to be done.

8. *But when his disciples, &c.* Several of them may have beheld with a sort of regret, what seemed to them a waste of this precious ointment, but it was Judas (see John 12 : 4), who openly expressed his displeasure, and in such terms as called forth the rebuke of his Master. The reason for this is given by John, in his disposition to purloin and convert to his own use, what was put into the common bag or receptacle, placed under his care. Had the money into which this ointment might have been converted been given to him for the common use of the party, he might have appropriated no inconsiderable portion of it to his private use. He was an avaricious man, and this led him from crime to crime, until he ended his career by selling his Lord, and afterwards committing suicide. Truly in his case, the love of money was the root of all evil. *Saying.* Judas was the one who spoke. It is worthy of note, that the first time he is recorded to have spoken, he uttered this uncharitable censure of the offering of Mary. In how strong a contrast is his selfishness here placed, with her overflowing love for her dear Lord. *To what purpose*, i. e. why or for what reason. *Waste* of the ointment. So it appeared to Judas, and probably in a less degree and on far different grounds, to some of the other disciples, for we must not forget that Matthew is here speaking of the disciples in general, and it is only from John, that we see the form of Judas rise up in such dark and prominent outlines in this transaction. There were none of them that apprehended what our Lord afterwards declared (v. 12), that it was an anointment for the burial which his body was soon to undergo.

been sold for much, and given to the poor.

10 When Jesus understood *it*,

9. *For this ointment, &c.* This was a hypocritical reason, for he cared nothing for the poor (see John 12 : 6), but only wished to appropriate the money to his own use. *Might have been sold, &c.* In Mark, "for more than three hundred pence" (see N. on 18 : 28). *Given to the poor.* Judas took the strongest claim of benevolence, in order to cover up his real sentiments. The poor had always received the kindest notice of his Master. By referring to this class, as the persons to be benefited by the sale of the ointment, he thought he should both win the commendation of his Lord, and lead many to bestow upon Jesus and his disciples, means to gratify their benevolent desires to assist the poor. This pretended love for the poor has not been confined to Judas alone. Thousands in every age, and especially in these times of benevolent effort to spread the Gospel among the heathen, have declaimed against what they term a misuse of Christian charity, in giving so much for the cause of missions, while there are so many poor in every neighborhood. In the great majority of instances, these very men, like Judas, care little for the poor, and only use this plea in their behalf as a cloak to conceal their displeasure, that so much is bestowed upon the cause of Jesus Christ. As a general fact, they, whose sympathies and benefactions are enlisted in objects of Christian benevolence, are the foremost also in those charities, which refer to the temporal wants of those around them.

10. *Why trouble ye, &c.* Mark says, "they murmured against her." She was doubtless reproved for what seemed to all a prodigal waste of this ointment. *She hath wrought, &c.* She has performed a very timely and suitable service, when viewed in connection with the event of my death, which is soon to take place. This is expressed more fully in v. 12. Mary did not in-

he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.

11 <sup>f</sup> For ye have the poor always with you; but <sup>g</sup> me ye have not always.

12 For in that she hath poured this ointment on my

<sup>f</sup> De. 15: 11; Jn. 12: 8. <sup>g</sup> See ch. 18: 20, & 28: 20; Jno. 13: 33, & 14: 19. & 16: 5, 23, & 17: 11.

tend it for any such service, but only as an expression of deep and overflowing love, for her Lord.

11. *Ye have the poor, &c.* Attention to the wants of the poor is here indirectly enjoined upon us. But in the case of the disciples, as with us, there were continued opportunities to perform this duty, whereas, what was to be done for their Lord was to be done quickly, as he was soon to leave them. The greater duty was to take precedence of the less. See N. on 5: 23, 24.

12. *For in that she hath poured, &c.* More literally, *for in having poured this ointment on my body, she hath done it for the preparing of me for burial.* I cannot agree with Alford in supposing this to have been Mary's intention or purpose. But we are often made the instruments of providential purposes, without our being in the least conscious of it. Some translate, "she has done it as if for my burial." But this translation is founded on an unjustifiable ellipsis, and falls below the full import of the passage, which is that the thing was actually done in reference to his burial, however unconscious she may have been of the real meaning of her act. In regard to the preparation of bodies for burial, it was the Oriental custom to anoint them with aromatic substances, especially myrrh and aloes. Mary had therefore only anticipated what would be done after his death. As this custom was common, they had no reason to find fault with its being thus performed, in reference to his death and burial, which was so near at hand.

body, she did it for my burial.

13 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

14 ¶ <sup>h</sup> Then one of the twelve,

<sup>h</sup> Ma. 14: 10; Lu. 22: 3; John 13: 2, 30.

13. *This gospel, i. e. the gospel relating to the kingdom of the Messiah.* In this sense the word is used in Mark 1: 15; 13: 10; 14: 9. After the day of Pentecost, the word *gospel* was usually employed, to denote the gospel scheme or plan of redemption through Christ, with its doctrines, duties, precepts, &c. *In the whole world.* These words are to be taken with *wheresoever*, and refer here to the whole habitable earth. *For a memorial, &c. i. e. to her honorable remembrance.* See Acts. 10: 4, where the word is also used of something praiseworthy.

14. *Then.* This word, as has been remarked (N. on v. 6), seems clearly to connect the visit of Judas to the chief priests, with the preceding incident at the supper. It is taken in the more indefinite sense, *about that time*, by those who have supposed the supper to have taken place at the time mentioned by John, six days before the passover (see N. on v. 6). It may seem strange that for so mild and slight a rebuke, Judas should have resolved on so base and treacherous a deed. But several things are to be borne in mind. The rebuke was felt keenly by him, through consciousness of having so richly deserved it, and the evidence thereby furnished, that his true character was known to his Master. He had no grace in his heart, to make the words of reproof as excellent oil (Ps. 141: 5), but was in such a frame, that all his bad passions were stirred up and set on fire of hell. There may have also been some previous rebukes, which rankled in the traitor's heart, and which needed

called 'Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,

15 And said *unto them*, <sup>k</sup>What will ye give me, and I will deli-

† Ch. 10 : 4.

only this fresh reproof, to be aroused in all their force to hurry him on to his desperate undertaking. He had no conception of the sad results of his act of betrayal. This appears from his awful remorse and suicide, when he found that he had betrayed innocent blood to the malice of those, who would be satisfied with nothing short of his Master's death. *One of the twelve*. This heightens his guilt. He was one of our Lord's family, chosen to the honorable and responsible office of apostle. *Called Judas Iscariot*. His name is given to make the record more emphatic and expressive. Luke says that "Satan entered into him," which does not imply his previous freedom from satanic influence, but simply the more active effort of diabolical agency in this sudden purpose to betray his Lord. It is generally supposed that his avarice was the ruling passion, to which at this time the temptation of the devil was addressed. But while this may have had its influence, yet the connection clearly refers it to the angry feelings, excited by the rebuke he received from Jesus. *Went unto the chief priests*. Luke adds "captains," which refers not to military officers, but to the prefects and governors of the temple (see Acts 4 : 1). They had command of the priests, who kept guard over the temple. If this supper took place on the evening of the fourth day (i. e. the evening which commenced the fifth day, according to Jewish reckoning), the Sanhedrim was yet in session, or had scarcely adjourned, when Judas came with his treacherous proposal. Some who make vs. 4-13 a parenthesis, inserted out of its proper place, connect this with v. 3 thus: while they were in doubt whether they should apprehend Jesus or not, at that time one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went, &c.

ver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

16 And from that time he

‡ Zec. 11 : 12 ; Ch. 27 : 3.

15. *What will ye give me*. His avarice was to be satisfied, as well as his revenge. *Will deliver him unto you*, i. e. notify you where he passes the night, so that you may easily apprehend him. *They covenanted with him*; literally, *they placed* (in a balance), i. e. weighed out to him. It is not material whether the money was at once paid to him, or after the apprehension of Jesus. The account in Mark seems to favor the latter supposition. They certainly made an agreement with him. They arranged the terms. They had intended to defer their proceedings against Jesus, until after the festival which was at hand. But this unlooked-for defection of one of his followers, promised such favorable results, that they changed their plan, and resolved to avail themselves of this opportunity to get him in their power. *Thirty pieces of silver*. The Jewish shekel is here referred to, which was about 60 cents, making the sum for which he sold his Master about \$18. This, to a man of sordid avarice, whose savings had been in small sums, seemed a large amount of money.

16. *And from that time*, &c. It was during the night which followed the next day, that he succeeded in carrying his infamous plan into execution. Luke says, that "he sought opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of the multitude." On the night when this promise was made, our Lord was in Bethany, surrounded by his friends, where he seems to have spent the next day also. Towards evening, he sent his disciples into the city (v. 18) to prepare a place for the passover. On that night, Judas, taking advantage of his knowledge of the place of our Lord's usual retirement for prayer and meditation, effected his plan and betrayed him to the priests.

17-19. PREPARATION FOR THE PASS-



sought opportunity to betray him.

17 ¶ Now the first *day* of the *feast of unleavened bread*, the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that

ℓ Ex. 12 : 6, 18 ; Ma. 14 : 12 ; Lu. 22 : 7.

OVER. *Jerusalem*. Fifth day of the week. Mark 14 : 12-16 ; Luke 22 : 7-13.

17. *Now the first day, &c.* This was the 14th day of the month Nisan, and was called the first day of unleavened bread, because it constituted a day of preparation for the passover, which was celebrated on the evening of that day (i. e. the evening ushering in the 15th day, which it commenced according to the Jewish mode of reckoning time). At or before noon of the 14th day, the Jews began their preparation by putting from their houses all leaven, and getting all things in readiness to slay the paschal lamb, which was done a little before sunset between the *two evenings* (see N. on 14 : 15). This was done in order to meet the interpretation of Ex. 12 : 6 (see Marg. Reading) ; Levit. 23 : 5 ; Numb. 9 : 3, 5 ; Deut. 16 : 6. This day of preparation might well and naturally be referred to, as the first day of the festival of unleavened bread, although, properly speaking, that feast did not commence, until after the passover had been eaten the following evening. This is confirmed by Josephus, who speaks in one place of the 14th day of Nisan, as being the day of the feast of unleavened bread, although in another place, he expressly fixes the beginning of that festival on the fifteenth. In this way also that historian speaks of the festival, as continuing eight days. *Where wilt thou, &c.* This question was doubtless proposed, as the day began to draw to a close. It probably had reference to some remark, which had fallen from Jesus, of his purpose to eat the passover with his disciples, or perhaps to call his attention to the subject, as the time of preparation was drawing nigh.

we prepare for thee to eat the passover ?

18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand ; I will keep the pass-

*To eat the passover*, i. e. to celebrate the paschal feast. See N. on v. 2.

18. *The city*, i. e. Jerusalem. *Such a man*. So in our language we say, *Mr. Such-a-one*, or *Mr. So-and-so*, not deeming it fit or necessary to call him by name. In Mark and Luke, they were told how they should distinguish the man. The master of the house into which he entered, they were to address in the manner here directed. His omniscient eye saw clearly that all this would take place as predicted, and another evidence was furnished his disciples, that he knew well what would befall him in the city, whither he was going for the last time, before he was led within its gates to suffer. *The Master*. See N. on 12 : 38. *My time is at hand*. Some interpret thus : My time of keeping the passover, (which is one day earlier than the time of its observance by the Pharisees,) is at hand. But this is too trifling a sense for the time and occasion. It is to be referred most unquestionably to the time of his suffering and death (see John 17 : 4). It is not to be supposed, however, that the master of the house was aware of the import of the words, although the disciples, to whom he had so plainly and frequently declared his approaching death, probably now understood them in their true sense. *I will keep, &c.* The message is more fully given in Mark and Luke, to which the reader is referred. *With my disciples*. A room of some size would be required for such a company. Hence we are told in Mark and Luke, that it was a large upper room, furnished and prepared with couches spread around the table. It is most likely that in reference to the vast numbers, which came from the country into the city to celebrate the passover, many

over at thy house with my disciples.

19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

20 ¶<sup>m</sup> Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

*m* Ma. 14: 17-21; Lu. 22: 14; Jn. 13: 21.

houses were thus prepared for the reception of country friends, or for general purposes of hospitality.

19. *And the disciples did, &c.* They found it as Jesus had declared, and thus had an additional proof of his omniscience. *Made ready.* They provided a paschal lamb, and saw that it was prepared and cooked for the occasion.

20-25. THE PASSOVER MEAL. JUDAS IS POINTED OUT AS THE TRAITOR AND WITHDRAWS. *Jerusalem.* Evening introducing the sixth day of the Week. Mark 14: 17-21; Luke 22: 14-18; 21-23.

20. *The even* introducing the sixth day, and corresponding to our Thursday evening. *He sat down*, i. e. he reclined at the table, according to the Oriental manner. See N. on 23: 6. At first, they were to eat the passover standing, but in later times the regulation was dispensed with.

21. Between this and the preceding verse, Luke 22: 14-18, and 24-30, and John 13: 1-20, are to be read. Strange as it may seem, we are told in Luke, that while reclining at this supper, there was a strife among the disciples, which of them should be accounted greatest. It may have had reference to the places of honor at the triclinium (see N. on 23: 6). The incident recorded by John (13: 4-20), which directly followed this strife, was designed to rebuke this spirit and teach them humility. *As they did eat.* While partaking of the paschal feast. *Verily I say, &c.* This is noted by all the evangelists. John says that before he made the announcement, he was troubled in spirit, and openly testified what he had

21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, That one of you shall betray me.

22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

23 And he answered and said,

hinted at a few moments previous (see John 13: 18). The idea that one of his disciples, whom he had chosen to be near him, and had honored with such tokens of affection and confidence, should betray him to his enemies, so filled him with sadness, that his emotions became irrepressible, and he gave vent to them in the words here related.

22. *And they were, &c.* They knew that he referred to one of them who were then present, for he had said (Mark 14: 18; Luke 22: 21), that the betrayer was eating with him at the table. What an announcement! Well might they be filled with sorrow and consternation in view of it. *Lord, is it I?* This question, which was proposed by them all, or as Mark says, one by one, may have a twofold sense. It may be taken as an expression of confidence in their integrity, as an appeal to the Savior of their innocence. This would accord well with the vain confidence of Peter (see vs. 33, 34). But the other and more commonly received interpretation, which makes it expressive of distrust in their integrity, a fear that they might be left to commit this great crime, is doubtless the true one. It harmonizes also better with what Luke says, that "they began to inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing."

23. *He answered and said.* Previously to the reply of our Lord, John, at Peter's instance, had inquired of him in direct terms, who the traitor was. As he reclined next to Jesus at the table, he could easily propose this question, so as not to be heard by the other disciples. He was informed, but in such low tones that none but him

" He that dippeth *his* hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

24 The Son of man goeth, ° as it is written of him : but <sup>p</sup> woe

<sup>n</sup> Ps. 41 : 9 ; Lu. 22 : 21 ; Jn. 13 : 18.  
<sup>o</sup> Ps. 22 ; Is. 53 ; Da. 9 : 26 ; Ma. 9 : 12 ; Lu. 24 : 25, 26, 46 ; Ac. 17 : 2, 3, & 26 : 22, 23 ; 1 Col. 15 : 3.

could hear, that it was the one to whom he should give a sop. This, after he dipped it, he gave to Judas. Thus all but John were still in ignorance of the real traitor. This is evident from John 13 : 27-29. *He that dippeth his hand, &c.* The paschal lamb was eaten with a bitter sauce, made of raisins, vinegar, and other ingredients beaten together to the consistency of clay, to represent the clay in which their forefathers wrought while making brick. This is the dish thought here to be referred to. It may have been, however, the dish containing the pieces of meat, into which the hand was plunged according to the Eastern mode, in order to transfer the food to the mouth. The expression *dippeth his hand*, may be literally translated, *plungeth in his hand*. It does not refer to the giving of the sop, which was a private intimation to John of the one who was to betray him, but is a proverbial saying indicating a familiar friend, a table companion, one of a company of friends, like those then reclining at the table. But if Judas, as is probable, sat so near our Lord, as to use the same dish, the saying, even though proverbial, rendered the designation more specific than the first annunciation, which was so general as to include all who were eating with him at that time. The answer of our Savior was admirably adapted to bring Judas to reflection and repentance. He was not yet specifically pointed out, although our Lord, by narrowing the number including the unknown traitor, to those who were using the same dish with himself, showed that his designs were all well known to his Master. Then was the time for him to have paused, and sought his Lord's forgiveness with tears of repent-

unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed ! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

25 Then Judas, which betrayed

<sup>p</sup> John 17 : 12.

ance. But even this evidence that his heart was open to the eye of Jesus, and the dreadful woe pronounced in v. 24 upon him, failed to produce any good effect upon this son of perdition.

24. This verse, as is evident from Luke, forms a part of the announcement in v. 23. *Goeth*, i. e. dieth, departeth from life. *As it is written*. A suffering, dying Messiah was predicted in Ps. 22 : 1-3 ; Isa. 53 : 8 ; Dan. 9 : 26 ; Zech. 12 : 10 ; 13 : 7. *But woe unto that man, &c.* It rendered the conduct of Judas none the less criminal, that it was the plan and purpose of God, that his Son Jesus Christ should be delivered up to be put to death. Wicked men are unconsciously fulfilling the purposes and designs of God, but this does not excuse their wickedness (Acts 2 : 23). They sin voluntarily. Judas could have broken his wicked compact with the chief priests, and fallen at the feet of his Lord for pardon. But he chose to do otherwise, and his sin was just as great, as though Jesus had not been delivered up (as Peter says) by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. *It had been good, &c.* A proverbial saying, denoting the most miserable condition to which one can come. The Jews had a saying : " He that knoweth the law and doeth it not, it were better for him that he had not come into the world." The woe pronounced upon Judas, has very properly been adduced in proof of endless punishment, since, were it otherwise, however countless the ages which might roll away before its end, the eternity of bliss, which would follow his period of punishment, would render existence a blessing to him and not a curse.

25. *Then Judas, &c.* Judas appears

him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

q Ma. 14 : 22 : Lu. 22 : 19.

to have kept silence, while the other disciples proposed the question in v. 22. But in view of what our Lord had just said, and to avoid the suspicion of guilt, which his silence might fasten upon him, he now in turn proposes the inquiry. *Thou hast said.* A Hebraistic form of emphatic affirmation. In view of what is said in John 13 : 28, Alford thinks that our Lord did not utter the words *thou hast said*, but that Matthew recorded the substantial meaning of our Lord's reply in v. 23, and especially the sign, by which he revealed the traitor to his beloved disciple in v. 26. There will be, however, no necessity of this, if we refer the ignorance of the disciples noted in John 13 : 28, to the import of the words spoken in the preceding verse, "that thou doest do quickly." But if the disciples, except John, were altogether ignorant that Judas was referred to, this passage will furnish no insuperable difficulty, when we consider that Judas reclined so near his Lord, that the reply to this question may have been spoken in such low tones, that none but him could hear it. John says that after he had received the sop, which probably was almost simultaneously with our Lord's reply to his question, "Satan entered into him." His rage was excited at being thus detected, and through apprehension of further disgrace, and with the fires of hell raging in his bosom, after being further admonished by our Lord to do quickly what he was about to do, he went forth in the dark night to perform a deed, the most infamous which has ever been recorded in the annals of crime.

26-29. THE LORD'S SUPPER. *Jerusalem.* Evening introducing the sixth day of the Week. Mark 14 : 22-25 ; Luke 22 : 19, 20 ; 1 Cor. 11 : 23-25.

26. Between this and the preceding verse, we are to place vs. 31-35, in which Jesus foretells the denial of Peter,

26 ¶ <sup>r</sup> And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to

r 1 Co. 11: 23, 24, 25.

and the dispersion of the disciples. This is evident from the order of John, which is here to be followed. *Were eating* the passover. It was towards the close of the paschal feast, that the Lord's supper was instituted. This was an appropriate season, inasmuch as the passover was itself a type of Christ our Passover, the Lamb slain for the sins of the world. *Took bread*; literally, *the bread* used at the paschal feast. *And blessed it*, i. e. invoked his Father's blessing upon it. Luke says, "had given thanks," which has caused some to prefer the same reading in Matthew, found in some MSS. It was the Jewish custom never to take food or drink, without asking God's blessing upon it, and thanking him for his goodness. Our Lord was beginning now as it were a new supper, and therefore although they had not risen from the paschal feast, he invoked God's blessing upon the bread, and also the cup which followed. *Brake it.* Unleavened bread was baked in very thin round cakes, so that they were not cut but broken. This was symbolical of Christ's body broken for sin (see 1 Cor. 11 : 24). There was not a bone of our Lord's body broken (John 19 : 36), and yet torn, pierced, and wounded on the cross, as well as by the previous scourging and crown of thorns, his body might well be said to have been broken and bruised for our sin. *Gave it to the disciples.* The pieces were distributed among them, either by our Lord personally, or by being passed from one to another. It will be remembered that Judas was not present at the Eucharist, having previously left the company, on his traitorous errand to the chief priests (see John 13 : 30). *Take, eat.* Words of invitation and encouragement, addressed to all true believers down to the end of time, and from which no one who gives evidence of being a child of God, and is walking in communion



the disciples, and said, Take, eat; ' this is my body.

s 1 Co. 10 : 16.

and fellowship with Christ's followers can be lawfully debarred. *This is my body*, i. e. this represents my body. The form of expression is borrowed from Ex. 12 : 11, "it (i. e. the lamb) is the Lord's passover," i. e. the lamb represents the Lord's passing by the houses of the Israelites, when the first born of Egypt were slain. As the children of the families, in which the Jewish passover was eaten, would inquire as to its meaning, so the disciples might look inquiringly at their Lord, as he was breaking and blessing the bread. It was necessary for him, therefore, to inform them, who were yet children in spiritual knowledge, as to the symbolical meaning of this bread and wine, of which he was inviting them to partake. They did not inquire as to what the bread consisted of, when they turned their wondering eyes upon the Lord, but what it signified, and his assertion, *this is my body*, could only be understood by them in the sense, that the bread was representative of his body. This appears further from the very nature of the Jewish passover, which was symbolical or representative. The lamb represented the deliverance, which gave occasion for the institution of the passover. But when the Jewish children were told that this was the Lord's passover, who of them would be so dull as to suppose, that the paschal lamb was by some mysterious process changed into the very act of deliverance, the *passing by* or *over* the dwellings of the Israelites? How then could the disciples, sitting at a table, the food of which was thus symbolical, have received our Lord's language in any other than a figurative or symbolical sense? Nothing could have been further from their mind, than the idea that this was Christ's literal body. Indeed it is one of the strangest figments that ever entered the human mind, to suppose that such was his meaning. Luke and John both add the words, "this do in remem-

27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to

brance of me," which would be void of any intelligible sense, if the real body of Christ was eaten in the bread. But if the eating of the loaf was symbolical of his passion on the cross, then its object or purpose might well be declared to be the keeping of these sufferings and death in remembrance. It may be here remarked, that the form of words in the original does not refer so much to the bread, which is not mentioned, as to the *thing*, which as Alford remarks, precludes all idea of a substantial change. It only remains to be added, that the word translated *is*, in the Hebrew language often has the sense of *represents*. Compare Gen. 40 : 12 ; 41 : 26 ; Dan. 7 : 23 ; 8 : 21 ; 1 Cor. 10 : 4 ; Gal. 4 : 24.

27. *The cup* in which was contained the wine drunk at the passover. This was mingled with water, a custom which the Romanists still observe, and was drank four times during the festival. It is supposed that the third cup is here referred to, which was called the *cup of blessing* (see N. on v. 2). Luke says that "he took the cup, when he had supped," which must of course refer to the paschal supper. We have no evidence that our Lord himself partook of the eucharist. The words *take, eat*, as here rendered, and especially in Luke 22 : 17, seem clearly to imply that he did not. There is no reason, however, with Olshausen, to suppose from this, that the one who administers the sacrament should not himself, on that occasion, partake of it. Alford well inquires in view of this, how an *unassisted* minister could then *ever* communicate. If the minister represented Christ only, Olshausen's view might be correct, but he is also one of the disciples for whom Christ died, and who himself requires the spiritual refreshment furnished by the feast. *Gave thanks*. From the original word *eucharistesas*, employed by Matthew and Mark in reference to the cup, and by Luke and John also in reference to the

them, saying, ' Drink ye all of it ;  
28 For <sup>u</sup> this is my blood <sup>z</sup> of  
the new testament, which is shed

<sup>t</sup> Ma. 14 : 23. <sup>u</sup> See Ex. 24 : 8 ; Le. 17 : 11.  
<sup>z</sup> Je. 31 : 31.

bread, the Lord's supper was called by the early Christians the *Eucharist*, the feast of thanks and praise. *Drink ye all of it.* How strange that the Romanists, in face of this passage, should prohibit the cup from the laity, as though it were originally designed for the apostles and their successors only. The same argument which confines the wine to the clergy, when fairly applied, must limit the bread also to them. But in regard to neither of the elements, is there any such restriction. On the contrary, in this verse, *all* are commanded to drink of the cup, and this certainly must embrace all who had been previously invited to partake of the bread, that is, the whole body of believers.

28. *For this is my blood*, i. e. a symbolical representation of my blood. *Of the new testament*, that by which the new covenant (i. e. the gospel dispensation) is ratified and sanctioned. This is called a *new* testament or covenant, in contradistinction from the Mosaic covenant or Jewish economy, which was entered into at Mount Sinai, and ratified with the blood of sacrificial victims. So the new or Christian dispensation, with its promised blessings and conditions, was to be ratified with the blood of Christ, represented by the cup of which the disciples were directed to drink. Luke and John express it, "this cup is the new testament in my blood," the same idea of ratification by the blood of Christ being expressed in a slightly varied form, as though it had been said, "this cup represents the commencement of a new covenant or dispensation ratified with my blood." *Which is shed*, &c. This explains the object or purpose for which Christ's blood was to be shed, viz. *for the remission of sins*. This was what the sacrificial blood, which ratified the former covenant, could not effect. But the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.

<sup>y</sup> for many for the remission of sins.

29 But <sup>z</sup> I say unto you, I will

<sup>y</sup> Ch. 20 : 23 ; Ro. 5 : 15 ; He. 9 : 22.  
<sup>z</sup> Ma. 14 : 25 ; Lu. 22 : 13.

It purifies the soul, and removes all the dire consequences of transgression. It needed to be shed but once only, for, not like the high priest with the blood of goats and bullocks once every year (Heb. 9 : 7), but with his own blood he entered once for all into the sanctuary (Heb. 9 : 12). *Which is shed*, i. e. about to be shed. In the original the participle is used in the sense of the *proximate* future, the event being however mentally regarded as present. *For many*. See N. on 20 : 28. *For the remission of sins*, i. e. for freeing from the guilt and consequences of sins. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." Heb. 9 : 22. This was true under the Mosaic economy. Every sin and trespass had to be atoned for or freed from temporal penalty, by specified and appropriate sacrifices. Some transgressions were so heinous, that exemption from temporal punishment even, could not be obtained by sacrifices (Numb. 15 : 30, 31). How much more true was it, that the sacrifices of the Mosaic law could not free the soul from guilt, in the sight of a righteous and holy God (Heb. 10 : 4). In what way then was remission of sin to be obtained? By the shedding of blood, and that too of a being, whose worth and dignity would render him of sufficient value to be accepted of God, as a substitute for the sinner. Such a personage was Jesus Christ, the incarnate God, who in offering himself to death made an atonement for the sinner, so that God, without compromising the interests of justice, can now grant pardon to all who accept of salvation on the terms offered in the gospel.

29. *I will not drink henceforth*, &c. Various interpretations have been given to this verse, but all hinge on the sense given to the phrase, *in my Father's kingdom*, or, as Luke has it, *in the king-*

not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, <sup>a</sup> until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

*a* Ac. 10 : 41.

*dom of God.* Those who give to these expressions the general sense, *the gospel dispensation*, suppose the meaning to be, that he would drink no more with them, until after his death and resurrection. But we have no evidence, that, he drank wine with them after his resurrection. Nor does this interpretation give any adequate sense to the word *new*, unless it is made to refer to Christ's spiritual, communing presence in the Eucharist, which would press its meaning too far. Those who believe in Christ's personal reign on earth at the millennium, refer it to his sharing in earthly festivities at that time with his people. But there is no proof of such a personal reign in God's word rightly expounded, and this interpretation of the passage falls therefore to the ground. Closely allied to this is their view, who refer it to the marriage feast of the Lamb, or the "marriage supper which is prepared for the church at the second coming of Christ" (Thiersch). Alford, who cites with approbation this view of Thiersch, says, that "these words carry on the meaning and continuance of this eucharistic ordinance, even into the new heavens and new earth." That interpretation seems to be most free from objections which refers the wine spoken of here, to *the joys and communion of heaven*, which are often represented under the imagery of a feast. Wine thus emblematic of this heavenly communion, would be drunk new (i. e. in a far higher and more spiritual sense) with him in his Father's kingdom, when they entered upon their heavenly inheritance. The words *fruit of the vine* are here put for *wine*, and this declaration being made at the close of the feast, when the cup was about to be passed around, he naturally and appropriately uses the drinking of wine, as a figure to show that his life was soon to end, and that he would never on earth

30 <sup>b</sup> And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

31 Then saith Jesus unto them,

*b* Ma. 14 : 26.

again partake with them of such a feast, as they were then celebrating, but that the reality of this symbolical representation, would be enjoyed by them all in his Father's kingdom in heaven. *That day* is to be taken in the general sense of *time*, and its actual reference to each believer, is the time of his admission to the upper sanctuary at the hour of death.

30. *When they had sung, &c.* This was probably the whole or part of the Paschal Hymn, called the Hallel (see N. on v. 2). The literal rendering *having hymned*, shows that they may have sung one hymn or several. Previous to this song of praise, our Lord pronounced the discourse, and offered the prayer contained in John, chaps. 14-17. Alford places these discourses and the prayer between the singing of the hymn and the going forth, but this seems less natural. *Went out of the city. Mount of Olives.* See N. on 21 : 1.

31-35. JESUS FORETELLS PETER'S FALL, AND THE DISPERSION OF THE TWELVE. *Jerusalem.* Evening introducing the sixth day of the Week. Mark 14 : 27-31.

31. *Then saith Jesus, &c.* According to Matthew's order, this would seem to have been addressed to the disciples after the institution of the Lord's supper, and after they had gone forth to the Mount of Olives. But the true order of narration is found in John, who places this prediction of Peter's fall and the dispersion of the Twelve, before the Lord's Supper, and while they were yet in the city. Doddridge however supposes that this warning was twice given to Peter, once before and once after the supper. *All ye shall be offended because of me*, i. e. ye shall all desert me, through fear and dejection at the trial to which I am to be subjected. *For it is written.*

“All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

32 But after I am risen again,

*c* Ma. 14 : 27; *Jn.* 16 : 32. *d* Ch. 11 : 6.  
*e* Zec. 13 : 7.

The quotation is from Zech. 13 : 7, in which it was predicted, that the disciples were to be dispersed, just as sheep are scattered, when the shepherd is smitten, and there is no one to look after them. This prophecy was now to have a fulfillment. God is said, in the original prophecy, to thus address the sword of his justice: “Awake sword against my shepherd (i. e. the shepherd of my people), and (even) against the man, my fellow (i. e. my equal), saith the Lord of Hosts: Smite the shepherd,” &c. Here God’s sword is commissioned to do what was really done by the hands of wicked men, who were his instruments, yet in such a sense as to be voluntary agents, deserving of Peter’s charge, that with *wicked hands* they crucified the Lord Jesus Christ. The sword of God also pierced our Lord in those mysterious agonies in the garden and on the cross, which far transcended his physical sufferings. The prophecy is a clear proof, both of the divine nature of Christ, and of the design of his death to satisfy the demands of divine justice.

The words of this prophecy as they stand in Zechariah, are thought by some, from the preceding context, to refer to a wicked shepherd, who had vainly endeavored to disguise the fact of his being a false prophet, and who was devoted therefore to destruction. But whether the words are to be applied to Christ, as a direct prediction, or by the argument *a fortiori* (see N. on 5 : 15)—that if such consequences resulted to the flock from the smiting of an evil shepherd, what direful effects must ensue from the smiting of a true one like the Lord Jesus Christ—the application of the prophecy to himself

VOL. I.—16

I will go before you into Galilee.

33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.

34 Jesus said unto him, Verily,

*f* Ch. 28 : 7, 10, 16; Ma. 14 : 28, & 16 : 7.  
*g* Ma. 14 : 30; Lu. 22 : 34; *Jn.* 13 : 38.

by our Lord, leaves no doubt as to the use we may make of it.

32. *But after I am risen, &c.* He had twice (16 : 21; 20 : 19) before told them, that he should rise from the dead. *I will go, &c.* Some find in this form of expression a pastoral metaphor: I will go before you into Galilee, where, if you follow me, you will again find your shepherd and leader. But it seems better to regard it as a simple announcement, that he would precede them into Galilee. Most if not all of them present belonged in Galilee, and would naturally return thither, after the passover was ended. It is probable that our Lord named the particular place in Galilee, where he would meet them. By a comparison of 28 : 16, with John 21 : 1, it appears to have been a mountain near to Tiberias, a central and accessible place, especially to those beyond Jordan.

33. *Peter answered, &c.* With his usual promptness, and in this instance, at least, with no small share of vain confidence, Peter replies that he at least would remain firm, although every one else forsook him. What a lesson of self-distrust is taught us in this vain-glorious boast and subsequent fall of Peter.

34. *Jesus said unto him.* Previously to this direct prediction of Peter’s fall, our Lord graciously informs him (see Luke 22 : 31, 32), that Satan was about to make the most desperate efforts to effect his ruin, but that in answer to his prayer, he would not fall beyond recovery, and that when he was restored, his first care should be to strengthen his brethren. But Peter again affirmed his readiness to go with his Lord, both into prison and to death. This passage in Luke fills out the story, and renders it more



I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

35 Peter said unto him, Though

complete and impressive. *Before the cock crow.* Mark says, "before the cock crow twice." This includes the first crowing, which takes place about midnight, and which was left out of account by the other Evangelists, inasmuch as the second crowing, which takes place about day-break, was the only one used to designate a particular time of night. There is then no discrepancy in the more circumstantial statement of Mark, as compared with that of the other Evangelists. *Thou shalt deny me thrice*, i. e. disown all acquaintance with me. What an appalling announcement to Peter. On that very night of his confident boast, that he would never forsake his Master, he was three times to deny in the most positive terms, that he had any acquaintance with him, or even knew him (Luke 22 : 34).

35. With such repeated evidence of his Lord's knowledge of the future, one would have supposed that Peter would have hesitated to repeat his professions of steadfastness "the more vehemently" (Mark), declaring that he would sooner die than to deny his Master in any manner whatever. *Though I should die with thee*; literally, *even though it might be necessary for me to die*, &c. A violent death is here referred to. *Yet will I not deny thee.* Such was also the asseveration of all. In their zeal and love for their Lord, and with all sincerity, but very little self-knowledge, they join in Peter's profession of fidelity, although that very night they all forsook him and fled (see v. 56 ; Mark 14 : 15). Perhaps there never was an instance, in which human presumption received a severer rebuke, and a boastful, self-reliant spirit shown to be so worthless in time of peril, as in this simple history of the protestations of fidelity on the part of Peter and his fellow-disciples, and their subsequent desertion of their Lord.

I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

36 ¶ <sup>¶</sup> Then cometh Jesus with

*h* Ma. 14 : 32-35 ; Lu. 22 : 39 ; Jn. 18 : 1.

36-40. THE AGONY IN GETHSEMANE. *Mount of Olives.* Evening introducing the sixth day of the Week. Mark 14 : 32-42 ; Luke 22 : 40-46 ; John 18 : 1.

36. *Then cometh Jesus*, &c. It appears from Luke 22 : 35-38, that after the professions of fidelity made by Peter and the other disciples, our Lord, after referring to the fact, that when he sent them forth on a former occasion, they lacked nothing, taught them that they were now going into a strife, which would demand the exercise of all their energies and means of self-defence. He directed them to arm themselves for the conflict which was approaching, and upon their answering, through misapprehension of the kind of weapons to which he referred, that they had two swords, he replied, that of such weapons they had enough, thus disabusing them of their error in supposing him to have reference to carnal weapons. After having thus forewarned them of the dreadful spiritual conflict which was approaching, and in which they would be called to bear a principal part after his resurrection and ascension, he went forth to the garden, where almost immediately commenced those awful and mysterious sufferings, upon which angels must have looked down with amazement, and which no created mind can ever fathom. *Into a place*, i. e. a field or farm. Such fields had names frequently given them. See 2 Kings 18 : 17 ; 2 Sam. 2 : 16 ; Acts 1 : 19. This field, which John (18 : 1) denominates a garden, had the name Gethsemane (i. e. *an oil press or the place of oil presses*), probably from the olives with which the place abounded. Tradition places this plot or garden on the brook Kidron, at the foot of the Mount of Olives. "It is a field or garden," says a recent traveller, "about fifty paces square, with a few shrubs growing in it, and eight olive

them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

37 And he took with him Pe-

*i* Ch. 4 : 21.

trees of great antiquity, the whole enclosed with a stone wall." The place was probably fixed upon, as Dr. Robinson thinks, during the visit of Helena to Jerusalem, A. D. 326, when the places of the crucifixion and resurrection, were supposed to be identified. Eusebius, a few years after this visit of Helena, says that Gethsemane was at the foot of the Mount of Olives, which is the location which Jerome assigns it, some sixty years afterwards. The church which Jerome says was built upon it, Theophanes mentions, as existing near the seventh century. Thus tradition quite clearly identifies the place, as the one usually assigned it, at the foot of Mount Olivet. *Sit ye here.* This direction seems to have been given, as they entered the garden. According to Luke, he enjoined upon them to pray that they entered not into temptation. But it is probable that they were soon overcome with sleep, as were Peter, James, and John, who were nearer the scene of agony. *While I go, &c.* As Jesus had frequently left his disciples, to enjoy prayer and communion with God by himself, there was nothing unusual in his retirement, even at this late hour for prayer.

37. *And he took with him, &c.* These were his favored disciples, who saw the glory of his transfiguration. They were now chosen to witness his agony. As on the former occasion they were heavy with sleep, and awaked to witness only the closing of the glorious scene, so now they fall asleep, and leave him to plead with his God in agony alone. His glory was then beyond comprehension; his distress and anguish now are equally incomprehensible. On the Mount of Transfiguration, his divine nature was unveiled to mortal view; in the garden of Gethsemane, were revealed the depths of his suffer-

ter, and 'the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

38 Then saith he unto them, <sup>k</sup> My soul is exceeding sorrowful,

*k* John 12 : 27.

ing humanity. *To be sorrowful and very heavy.* There is an increase of mental distress indicated by these two words, the former denoting the being filled with grief, the latter, the being overwhelmed and stupefied with anguish. Mark says, that "he began to be sore amazed and very heavy," i. e. he was in such mental distress, that it filled him with amazement. He knew not what to think of such dreadful throes of mental agony.

38. *My soul* (i. e. our Lord's human soul) *is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* Words expressive of most intense mental anguish. Literally, *my soul is environed with grief, to an extent of mortal agony.* This suffering could not have arisen from the terrors of approaching death. Many of his followers, even of the weaker sex, have gone to the bloody amphitheatre or to the stake, singing his praises, and meeting death with the calmest composure. They were sinful beings too, about to be ushered into the presence of a holy and sin-hating God. But he had never sinned. He was one who had received the highest tokens of honor and approval from his heavenly Father. His voice, the winds and waves, and even death itself, had obeyed, and yet he is now so filled with agony, that he sinks down beneath the load of suffering, and praying again and again for its removal, is only sustained under this mortal distress, by the ministrations of an angel from heaven (Luke 22 : 43). Can any one suppose that all this suffering was the natural shrinking of humanity from the death of the cross? That Jesus had an instinctive dread of physical suffering, like any other human being, no one will deny. But that he should manifest less fortitude under suffering, than some of the weakest of his martyred people, is beyond belief. There is

even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

but one solution to his overwhelming distress, and that is, that in some mysterious way, he was caused to feel the terrors of divine wrath against sin, that as the sinner's substitute, upon him descended the stroke of God's displeasure, under which his humanity (for his divine nature could not suffer), was utterly crushed and overwhelmed.

The manner and degree of this infliction of divine wrath, we do not know. It may have been in part the hiding of his Father's face, which to a holy being, is one of the direst of calamities. This seems to receive confirmation from his cry on the cross, *Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani*, when this agony of the garden returned again with increased strength. It is thought by some, that this was an hour also of spiritual conflict with the powers of darkness, who were presenting strange phantasies and strong temptations before his troubled mind. There was doubtless, as we have before hinted, a positive infliction of God's wrath, upon him, so that he not only tasted of temporal death for every man, but had experience of the divine anger against sin, which will for ever burn against the unregenerate in the world of woe. To some such causes as these must we attribute his excruciating mental anguish. It should, however, be constantly borne in mind that his human nature alone shared in all his sufferings. This may be mysterious to us, but not more so than many other things said of him, which can refer only to his human nature, as that he increased in wisdom (Luke 2 : 24), and knew not the precise time when Jerusalem was to be destroyed (see N. on 24 : 36).

It is thought by some, that while his divine nature did not suffer on this occasion, yet it imparted strength to his human nature, so that he was enabled to endure an amount of suffering, under which, thus unaided, he would have sunk. Such seems to be the

39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and 'prayed,

1 Ma. 14 : 36; Lu. 22 : 42; He. 5 : 7.

opinion of that eminent scholar and profound thinker, Prof. Lewis. "By their union," says he, "and only by virtue of their union, does the divine and human person, the personality of the God-man, become (in his human nature as the seat or medium, if any choose thus to view it, but still none the less really) capable of those *extraordinary*, superhuman, most mysterious, and ineffable sufferings, which Christ endured for our redemption, even those agonies on the cross and in the garden." Bib. Repos. Third Series. Vol. II. p. 407. But although on this awful and mysterious subject, we should speak with great reverence, and distrust in our own feeble and short-sighted intellect, yet we cannot but regard this view, to say the least, quite questionable. Had it been so, there would seem to have been no necessity for the ministration of an angel to strengthen him, thus supported and rendered capable of suffering by the divine union. It appears very clear from his whole history, that his human nature alone was the theatre, so to speak, of the achievement of man's redemption. Its union with the divine nature gave it worth and dignity, and rendered it an offering acceptable in the sight of God, for the sin of a fallen world.

*Tarry ye here.* His agony was too great to be witnessed by any human eye. He kindly spared his disciples a sight, which must have filled them with the deepest grief. *Watch with me.* This bespeaks also their sympathy in his sufferings. It was a solace in his distress, to feel that he had friends near him, who, if they could not alleviate his sufferings, were ready to watch with him, and unite their prayers with his for divine aid in this hour of distress.

39. *He went a little further.* Luke says, "he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast," where the verb has much the signification of our expression, *to tear one's self away*, signi-

saying, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from

*m* John 12 : 27.

*n* Ch. 20 : 22.

fyng great reluctance to leave. He wished the sympathizing company of his beloved disciples, but was impelled by his dreadful agony to withdraw by himself alone. *And fell on his face.* He first kneeled down (Luke), but as his mental anguish increased, he prostrated himself on the ground, and "with strong crying and tears, offered up his prayers and supplications" (Heb. 5 : 7). *O my Father.* "Abba, Father." Mark. Never was a prayer offered, in which these words had greater significance and emphasis. It was the Son of God in helpless agony, calling upon his Father for relief. May we not suppose that the Father looked with the tenderest sympathy upon the Son of his bosom, thus prostrate in grief? But the work of human redemption was to be accomplished, and God spared not his own Son (Rom. 8 : 32), but laid upon him the iniquity of us all, and bruised and wounded him for our transgressions (Isa. 53 : 5, 6). How hopeless does this render the condition of those, who are the final objects of God's wrath, through impenitence and unbelief, and who can make no such plea for deliverance, as was here made by God's only and well-beloved Son. *If it be possible.* All things are possible with God, which are not self-contradictory or irreconcilable with his attributes. But our Savior refers here to what is possible, viewed in relation to the accomplishment of God's plans and purposes in man's redemption. He prays for relief from his dreadful sufferings, if God's design of mercy to the human race whom he came to redeem, will not thereby be frustrated. This same idea is expressed in Mark, although in varied form. "Abba Father, all things are possible unto thee," i. e. every thing is subordinate to thy will and pleasure, and thy goodness will not permit any suffering which can be dispensed with. *Let this cup pass from*

me : nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou *wilt.*

40 And he cometh unto the dis-

*o* John 5 : 30, & 6 : 38; Phi. 2 : 8.

*me*, i. e. remove from me this dreadful load of suffering. The expression is borrowed from passing the cup by one at the feast. In respect to the use of the word *cup*, see N. on 20 : 22. In Mark the *cup* is designated by *hour* (i. e. the hour of suffering). In respect to the slight variations in the different Evangelists, they are only verbal, and affect not the sense, in which there is a remarkable agreement. In the intense agony of our Lord, he may have employed a variety of forms of expression, some of which were repeated by one Evangelist, and some by another. I cannot therefore think with Alford, that "the very words of our Lord, the Holy Spirit has not seen fit to give us," but rather that we have them, in the varied forms of utterance as wrung from the anguished soul of our Lord." *Nevertheless.* This particle has the force of *but rather*, *but much rather*. Although sinking under sufferings almost unendurable, our Lord signified his cheerful acquiescence to his Father's will. We must not misconceive this passage, in which Christ prays that the cup may pass from him, to teach in the remotest degree, that our Lord's purpose, as the Messiah, God incarnate, ever faltered in the work of human redemption. This was the cry for relief of weak humanity, borne down to the very abyss of suffering, under the load which pressed upon it.

40. *And he cometh*, &c. He can find no rest or relief from suffering, and he now comes for sympathy to his beloved disciples. *Findeth them asleep.* Neither obedience to his command, nor sympathy in his grief, prevented their falling asleep. This seems almost unaccountable. It was not however because they were indifferent either to his command or his distress. Our Lord himself exonerates their spirit or disposition from all blame (v. 41). They had become exhausted by the intense



ciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What,

could ye not watch with me one hour?

41<sup>r</sup> Watch and pray, that ye

ᾤ Ma. 13: 33, & 14: 38; Lu. 22: 40, 46; Ep. 6: 18.

emotions awakened by the scenes of the last supper, and now at this late hour of night, were physically unable to resist the influence of sleep. Their eyes were heavy (Mark), and no effort of the will could keep them from closing in sleep. Luke's expression is not to be overlooked, "he found them sleeping through sorrow." Their physical and mental energies were not only exhausted, but they were so stupefied by grief at his intense sufferings, that sleep easily overcame them. Dr. Rush says, that "profound sleep is a symptom of grief." Viewed in this light, what at first appears to be an indifference on their part to the sorrows of their Master, is a proof of their deep devotion to him. *Saith unto Peter.* He was the oldest and leading disciple, and had but a short time before been loud in his professions of willingness to go with his Master even unto death. He is now gently admonished, that if he cannot watch with him a few brief moments, he cannot hope to stand the trial, to which his courage and affection for his Master will soon be subjected. This appears more clearly in Mark, "*Simon* (not *Peter*, the rock-like, ardent, zealous disciple, but *Simon*, the name borne before he had any knowledge of Jesus),  *sleepest thou?*  Thou who madest such professions of attachment, couldst not  *thou*  watch one hour? We are not to suppose from this designation of time, that the agony of our Lord lasted just one hour. The expression is used for an indefinitely short period.

41. *Watch and pray.* At first they were directed to watch (v. 38), but now prayer is added as a duty. It is Christian watchfulness which is now enjoined upon them. They were wearied out in body and mind. This rendered them more liable to yield to the temptations, which were soon to beset them. They were directed to watch against tempta-

tion, and to pray for strength adequate to the occasion. *That ye enter not, &c.* This does not mean a state or condition where they would not be tempted, for this while on earth they could not avoid, and indeed as furnishing a test of character, and as a means of wholesome discipline, they were to rejoice when they fell into divers temptations (James 1: 2). But the evil against which they were to pray, lies in the words, *enter into*, which here means *to fall under, yield to.* Such also is the sense of the phrase, "fall into temptation." *The spirit, &c.* This, as was remarked under v. 40, was a kind apology for their previous remissness. But it was also meant to be an incentive to greater vigilance, and more earnest prayer in this time of unwonted trial. *Spirit*, i. e. will, counsel or purpose, whose seat is in the mind; or spirit, as opposed to the body or physical energies. *Willing*; literally, *eager, zealous.* The same word is used in Mark, and better translated *ready*, for *willing*, in our use of the term, does not reach the full meaning of the original. They were not represented as merely willing to watch and suffer with their Lord, but were forward, ready, zealous to do so. But their *flesh* was *weak.* Their bodily powers were incapable of long endurance, their natures were carnal, corrupt, prone to sin, liable to be overcome with temptation. Here lay their great need of constant watchfulness and prayer. This kind and considerate admonition of his disciples, is a remarkable example of a mind weighed down with anguish, and yet full of tender solicitude for the welfare of others. I cannot agree with Alford and some others, who regard this, as intended to be taken in a general sense, and that our Lord himself is included in it. It bereaves the passage of its pathos and power, and overlooks its manifest connection with the preceding context, as a reason for

enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.

42 He went away again the second time and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

the prayer and watchfulness there enjoined.

42. *Again the second time.* This is not pleonastic, but an emphatic fullness of expression. The idea is imparted, that he was again, a second time, impelled by his agony, to resort in prayer to God for relief. *If this cup, &c.* Mark says, "he prayed and spake the same words." This does not imply absolute sameness of words, but that the general burden of his prayer was the same. Every agonizing groan and cry for relief from the depths of his distress, was accompanied with the all-absorbing desire, that his Father's will instead of his own might be done. How long he remained in these repeated seasons of prayer, we are not told. We must not suppose them to be longer than would be consistent with the numerous events, which are crowded into this remarkable night.

43. *Found them asleep, &c.* The reason is given in the next clause, *their eyes were heavy*, i. e. (as we say in common parlance) they were unable to keep open their eyes. He probably administered to them some gentle reproof, for Mark says that "they wist not what to answer him," i. e. they were so surprised and confused at being again found sleeping, that they could make no reply. They had struggled hard against the insidious approach of sleep, but their physical and mental exhaustion was such, that all their watchfulness against it was in vain, and they were overwhelmed with shame and confusion, at their apparent disregard of the injunction of their Lord.

44. *And he left them, &c.* At this time, I am inclined to think, he experienced the dreadful agony recorded by

43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep

Luke (22: 44). If so, his mental distress had been all the while increasing, and he would not be likely to tarry long with his disciples on his second return. He probably repeated his injunction to prayer and watchfulness, and was hurried back by his anguish of mind, to the scene of prayer and conflict. At this time, Luke says that "there appeared unto him from heaven an angel strengthening him." The strength thus imparted enabled him to pray "more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were (literally, *as if it were*) great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Strange that any can attribute this agony, to the mere shrinking of human nature from the death of the cross. Taken in connection with our Lord's history, it has neither the elements or features of mere dread of physical suffering. That our Savior shrunk from the dreadful death which awaited him, no one will deny. But his anguish in the garden appears to be aside and above this. Words expressive of such agony, are nowhere in the annals of human suffering to be found. *Saying the same words.* The burden of his prayer was, that God's will might be accomplished, even if he were to drain the cup of suffering. May we never lose sight of this feature in our Savior's prayer, and in all our afflictions, may we say also, "not my will but thine be done."

45. *Then cometh he, &c.* So Mark, in harmony with Matthew, says: "and he cometh the third time." The hour of his agony and conflict had now come to an end. He returns to his disciples, and finding them again sunk in sleep, he addresses them in the words of Luke (22: 46), "Why sleep ye? rise

on now and take *your* rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." But, knowing that Judas and his band were now entering the garden, he continues, in the words of Matthew and Mark: *sleep on now and take your rest: behold, the hour, &c.* Some regard this as a question: *do you sleep now? or, do you yet sleep?* But the original does not permit this, as the word rendered *now*, has the invariable sense, *henceforward, henceforth, for the rest of the time.* Others find in it a slight shade of irony, but the time and circumstances forbid the use of this figure, even in the slightest degree. It is better to regard it as a plain intimation, that the hour of his distress, in which he stood in special need of their sympathy, was past, and that they were now permitted to take, during the remainder of the night, such rest as they might be able to obtain. There is no discrepancy between this permission, and the following words in Mark, "rise, let us be going," for this had reference to joining the disciples, who had been left at the entrance of the garden (v. 36). The permission to sleep did not imply that they were to spend the residue of the night in the garden, but that after his forcible seizure, which was now at hand, they might rest, as their circumstances would permit. The direction *sleep on now*, was a simple removal of the previous command, *watch with me*, and shows the considerate kindness of our Lord, for their bodily as well as their spiritual necessities. *Behold.* A common word to arrest and call attention to some important sentiment. *The hour*, i. e. the time of my betrayal. This appears from the next clause, *the Son of man is betrayed, &c.* where there is a striking antithesis between the words *Son of man*, an epithet by which our Lord so frequently refers to himself as the Messiah, and *sinners.*

46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

47 ¶ And <sup>9</sup> while he yet spake,

q Ma. 14: 43; Lu. 22: 47; Jno. 18: 3; Ac. 1: 16.

Although special reference is had to the chief priests, who dispatched the band, with Judas as guide, to apprehend him, yet the general term *sinners*, as opposed to the *Son of man*, who "came to save that which was lost" (18: 11; Luke 19: 10), seems designed to include the human race, all of whom virtually shared in the dreadful sin of crucifying the Lord Jesus Christ. Some critics refer it to the heathen or gentiles, to whom Jesus was delivered up to be crucified (27: 2; Mark 15: 1; Acts 3: 13; 4: 27). But this is far fetched, and unsuitable to the wants of the passage, as Jesus was betrayed into the hands of the chief priests, and by them delivered up to the Roman authority.

46. *Rise, let us be going.* It will be seen that Jesus, to the last, took all necessary precautionary measures against the machinations of his enemies. He did not throw himself into their power. He went out of the city to a secluded place, where he would have remained in concealment, had he not been betrayed by Judas. In view of this, we can be at no loss in what sense to take these words, *rise, let us, &c.* It was a note of alarm, rather than of exhortation, as it has usually been interpreted, to go forth and meet their enemies. It is as though he had said: let us leave the garden, which is no longer a place of concealment, since he is at hand that doth betray me. When it is said in John 18: 4, that he went forth and said to them, "whom seek ye?" it is spoken of what took place, after Judas and his company came in full sight.

47-56. JESUS BETRAYED AND APPREHENDED. *Mount of Olives.* Evening introducing the sixth day of the Week. Mark 14: 43; 52; Luke 22: 47-53.

47. Here may be read John 18: 2, 3, where we are told that Judas, who knew well the place, as one to which

lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

48 Now he that betrayed him, gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; hold him fast.

49 And forthwith he came to

our Lord frequently resorted, conducted thither a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees. *Judas, one of the twelve, came.* He went before the others (Luke), in order to point out Jesus by the preconcerted sign (v. 48). This is the last time he is denominated in the gospel, *one of the twelve.* See Acts 1 : 25. *A great multitude.* John speaks more particularly of this multitude, as composed of "a band of men (i. e. guards of the temple) and officers," i. e. the attendants or beadles of the Sanhedrim. It would appear also from Luke 22 : 52, that some at least of the Sanhedrim were present, to stir up the multitude against him, and see that his apprehension was effected. The word "band," in John, has been thought by some to refer to a detachment of Roman soldiers, stationed at the tower of Antonia, to quell any sedition which might arise in the city during the passover. But had these been sent to take Jesus, they would have conducted him at once to the Roman governor. It appears also in the very face of this passage in Matthew, as well as the parallel passages in Mark and Luke, compared with 26 : 55 ; Mark 14 : 48 ; Luke 22 : 52, that a tumultuous band of men, and not an orderly, well-disciplined cohort of Roman soldiers, are referred to. The chief priests would not lack instruments in the rabble to do their vile work. *With swords and staves,* as they might be able, on so short a notice, to arm themselves, as if to arrest a desperate thief (v. 55). *From the chief priests, &c.* This band acted, therefore, under the authority of the Sanhedrim.

48. The thread of the narrative requires what is related by John (18 : 4-9) to be here read. It appears that on their approach, he went forth to meet them, and inquired whom they sought. On their replying Jesus of Nazareth, he

answered that he was the man, at which they were inspired with such awe, or so affected by the energy of his divine power, that they drew back and fell to the ground. When they recovered from this state of awe and terror, he again asked, "Whom seek ye?" Upon their replying as before, he requested that his disciples might be suffered to depart in peace, by which circumstance a prediction of his intercessory prayer (John 17 : 12) had a fulfilment. Dr. Robinson thinks that nothing more is meant by their prostration, than the usual mode of reverence practised by the Orientals. But it would hardly be within the bounds of probability, that such a multitude, composed of the rabble, and led on by his most virulent enemies, would do reverence to one whom they were about to apprehend, as they would a thief. *Now he that betrayed, &c.* A circumlocution for Judas. In the original, *the betrayer.* *Gave them a sign,* as they set out, or while on their way to the garden. *I shall kiss.* This mode of salutation was common in those times, as indeed it is now in Oriental countries, and among some of the European nations. *Hold him fast.* Let him not go, whatever may be his protestations or attempts to escape. Probably Judas, judging our Lord by his own low standard of truthfulness, thought that he would deny that he was Jesus of Nazareth, or would resort to some artifice to avoid being taken.

49. *And forthwith he came, &c.* As Jesus had just avowed himself to be the man whom they sought, it may seem strange that this further sign should be required, that he was Jesus of Nazareth. But the leaders may have required this additional proof of his identity, through fear that some one of his disciples would personate him, in order to give him opportunity to escape. They abstained, therefore, from arresting Jesus,



Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed him.

50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

r 2 Sa. 20 : 9. s Ps. 41 : 9, & 55 : 13.

until the traitor had designated him by the preconcerted sign. It is not an improbable conjecture, that it may have resulted from a desire on the part of Judas to perform to the very letter his part of the engagement, in order that there might be no apology for withholding his reward, on the ground that his services had been but partially called into requisition. *Hail*; literally, *joy to thee, may joy attend thee*. The Orientals, when they met or parted, used this and similar friendly salutations. Compare Ruth 2 : 4 ; Judg. 19 : 20 ; 1 Sam. 25 : 26 ; 2 Sam. 20 : 9 ; Ps. 129 : 8.

50. *Friend*. An expression of civility, and not necessarily of friendship. See N. on 22 : 12. In Luke he is called directly by name. *Wherefore art thou come?* It is for no good purpose. There is treachery in thy heart, and in this very act of pretended friendship. The question of our Lord conveyed a most stinging rebuke, rendered still more pointed, by the words recorded in Luke, "betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" Dost thou prostitute this most endearing token of friendship, to so infamous a purpose, as the betrayal of thy Master? *And laid hands on Jesus*. Judas had told them to hold him fast. Our Lord made no resistance. "He was led like a lamb to the slaughter." There was no occasion for violence. Yet from the fact that his apprehension was effected by his most bitter enemies, and one of his disciples was aroused to resistance in his behalf, we may well suppose that he was treated in a very rough and unbecoming manner.

51 *One of them, &c.* This was Peter (see John 18 : 10), whose ardent, impulsive nature could not brook the unworthy treatment, which his Master was experiencing. It seems from Luke, that

51 And behold, 'one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest, and smote off his ear.

52 Then said Jesus unto him,

t John 18 : 10.

they in whose hands were the two swords (Luke 22 : 38), first inquired of Jesus whether they should use their weapons, but without waiting for an answer, Peter drew and wounded the high priest's servant, as here related. He had the physical courage to lay down his life for Christ, as he had expressed his readiness to do. But he lacked moral intrepidity in the presence of the great Sanhedrim, to confess that he belonged to the party of one, who was the object of their hatred and contempt, and he fell as our Lord had predicted. The sword which Peter used, was what is called by us, a *cutlass*, i. e. a sword adapted to cutting, rather than piercing, being bent instead of being straight. These two swords were in the company, probably as weapons of defence against robbers and banditti, who infested the roads in the region of Jerusalem. *Stretched out his hand*, i. e. laid his hand upon his sword to draw it from the scabbard. *A servant, &c.* His name was Malchus (John). *Smote off his ear*. The blow was directed at his head, but glancing a little, or not being well aimed in the darkness of the night, descended upon his ear. As it is said in Luke, that Jesus "touched his ear and healed him," it has been thought that the ear was only partially cut off, or as we say, hung by the skin. The miracle ought to have admonished them, that they were arresting no ordinary person, but one who was continually giving the most numerous and satisfactory credentials of his divine mission.

52. *Put up again, &c.* Return it to its sheath. Desist from any further act of violence. *Thy sword*. Not the kind of weapon to be employed in my cause (2 Cor. 10 : 4). *Into his place* (more properly, *into its place*). "The sheath is the place for the Christian's

Put up again thy sword into his place: "for all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword.

53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me <sup>2</sup> more than twelve legions of angels?

*u* Ge. 9: 6; Re. 13: 10. *æ* 2 Ki. 6: 17; Da. 7: 10.

sword" (Alford), to be drawn only when it subserves the will of God, in the punishment of evil doers. Rom. 13: 4. *For all they that take, &c.* Some have regarded this as a prediction, that they who are now drawing the sword against him, shall fall by the sword at the destruction of Jerusalem. But this is forced and unnatural. It is better to regard it, as a proverbial expression of the almost certain and premature death of those, who resort to the sword for the redress of wrong, founded, perhaps, on the great truth which underlies Gen. 9: 6. It is intended for the disciples, as a warning against resorting to the sword for defence, on occasions like this. The weapons of their warfare were not to be carnal, but spiritual, and in this lay their only safety.

53. Peter's conduct was not only rash and inconsiderate, but distrustful of God, as though he would leave his well beloved Son to be defended by a human arm, were there not some great moral necessity, that he should thus suffer from the hands of wicked men. *Thinkest thou, &c.* Here was his error. He acted as though his Lord no longer possessed that amazing power, which had stilled tempests, created food, raised the dead, and expelled powerful and malignant demons from those whom they had possessed. *Now.* Even at this present moment, when I am delivered into the hands of my enemies. *Pray to my Father.* Christ, as Mediator, was subordinate to the Father, and hence this aid is represented as being granted to him in answer to prayer. *Twelve legions.* The number *twelve* was selected, either as a favorite number with the Jews, or because

54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, <sup>y</sup> that thus it must be?

55 In the same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat

*y* Is. 53: 7, &c.; ve. 24; Lu. 24: 25, 44, 46.

Christ with the eleven apostles made that number. The Roman legion consisted of about 6,000 men, which would make the whole number here referred to 72,000 angels. This, however, is put for an indefinitely great number. Doddridge remarks: "how dreadfully irresistible would such an army of angels have been, when one of these celestial spirits was able to destroy 185,000 Assyrians at one stroke!"

54. *But how then.* The correct translation is *how then*, referring back to Peter's rash attempt to defend his Master. The train of thought is: since I do not invoke my Father's aid, *how then shall the Scriptures* (which foretell the passion and death of the Messiah) *be fulfilled*, if you interpose with the carnal weapons of defence? *That thus it must be.* There is an ellipsis, which the reader will easily supply: (which say) *that thus, &c.* Some punctuate and read thus: *how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled? For thus it must be.* The sense remains the same, whichever translation is adopted. In John, this sentiment is expressed in the words, "the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Not only was God's word to be fulfilled and honored in the sufferings of Christ, but obedience unto death in submission to the will of his Father, was also demanded of him. This shows that the cup spoken of, did not refer to the agony of the garden, for that had passed by, but to his suffering and death taken as a whole.

55. *In that same hour.* At that time. *To the multitudes.* In Luke, "to the chief priests and captains of the temple and the elders." In addressing the leaders, he virtually addressed the

daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

56 But all this was done, that the 'scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then <sup>a</sup> all the

<sup>a</sup> La. 4 : 20; ver. 54. <sup>a</sup> See Jno. 18 : 15.

bands of men whom they commanded. *As against a thief.* He was no thief, robber, or desperado, that they had need come to arrest him at the dead of night, with such a formidable band of armed men. *I sat daily,* &c. I was among you as a public teacher. You had every opportunity to hear me, and call me to account for any thing I did or said which was wrong. *Ye laid no hold on me,* because you knew that there was no ground of accusation against me, which would justify you in the sight of the people (see 21 : 46). Luke adds, "because this is your hour and the power of darkness." This was the hour of their triumph. Instigated by the powers of darkness, they were now given up to inflict upon him all these indignities, which they had long been desirous of doing, but from which, up to this hour, they had been kept in check by his heavenly Father.

56. *But all this was done,* &c. According to some expositors, these are the words of the evangelist. But a reference to Mark will show that they are those of our Lord. The great stress here laid upon the fulfilment of the Scriptures, shows conclusively their divine origin. The necessity of their fulfilment arose from their being the word of God. By *scriptures of the prophets,* is meant the prophetic writings, which speak of the sufferings and death of the Messiah, such as the Psalms, Isaiah, Daniel, Zechariah, &c. *All the disciples,* &c. Our Lord requested those who had been sent to apprehend him, to let his disciples depart in safety, and had they remained with him a few moments longer, as Doddridge remarks, they would have received a kind dismissal. But, either through fear that Peter's rash act would be imputed to them all, or seized with sud-

disciples forsook him, and fled.

57 ¶ <sup>b</sup> And he that had laid hold on Jesus, led *him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

<sup>b</sup> Ma. 14 : 53; Lu. 22 : 54; Jno. 18 : 12, 13, 24.

den alarm, at the angry demonstrations of the multitude as they were binding Jesus, they suddenly forsook him, notwithstanding their repeated protestations a little while before, that they would never desert him. He was thus left alone in the midst of his enemies. "He looked, and there was none to help, and wondered that there was none to uphold." Mark relates an incident, which appears in strong contrast with this cowardly conduct of the disciples. A young man, probably the owner of the field, who lived near by, hearing this midnight tumult, arose hastily from his bed, and, with nothing but a loose garment thrown around him, proceeded to the place, and finding that Jesus was apprehended and led away, followed him, and that too with such evident tokens of being his friend, that they seized hold of him, and he only escaped by leaving in their hands the cloth wrapped around him.

57-68. JESUS BEFORE CAIAPHAS AND THE SANHEDRIM. *Jerusalem.* Night introducing the sixth day of the Week. Mark 14 : 53-67; Luke 22 : 54, 63-71; John 18 : 13-18.

57. *Led him away,* &c. It appears from John, that he was led first to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas. This was done to confer honor upon him, or because it was first thought best to convene the council for examining Jesus at his house. When they brought him to the palace of Annas, he underwent a sort of private or unofficial examination, after which he was sent bound to Caiaphas, who was then high priest (John 18 : 24). At this place, the Sanhedrim, feeling quite sure of his apprehension through the treachery of Judas, had already assembled, so that there was no delay in his trial.

58 But Peter followed him afar off, unto the high priest's palace,

58. *But Peter followed, &c.* This shows his anxious solicitude and love for his Master. He followed him into the palace of the high priest, to watch the proceedings, and with some faint hope, perhaps, of furnishing aid to him should opportunity occur. But he followed his Lord afar off (Luke 22: 54). He would not be known as one of his followers. When charged with this he denied it repeatedly, and with an oath. We learn from this, the danger of not making a firm and open profession of our attachment to Christ. It becomes in many instances the occasion of gross sins, which the contrary course would have prevented. *Into the hall.* This was the inner court or quadrangle, around which open space the Oriental houses were built, and which was usually occupied by visitors, while waiting for audience or reception, and also by servants. From the front entrance to the house, which was closed with a strong and heavy gate, was a passage or porch (see v. 71; Mark 14: 68), sometimes arched to the interior open court. Besides this there was a smaller gate for the entrance of single persons, which was kept by a porter. It was in this interior and open court, that Peter stood and warmed himself by a fire, which had been made by the attendants, as the nights in that season of the year were cold, especially towards morning. In the rear of this court, or in some apartment on one side, the examination of Jesus was conducted, but so open to the court, that persons in either place could see what was going on in the other. This shows how Jesus could hear Peter's words, and turn and look upon him after his third denial (Luke 22: 61). *And went in.* According to John, he did not go in until a fellow disciple, who was known to the high priest, had first entered and obtained leave to bring Peter in. That fellow disciple was John, which accounts for his mentioning this incident, which

and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

59 Now the chief priests, and

had been omitted by the other evangelists. *And sat with the servants* in the open area or court above referred to. *To see the end*, i. e. to await the issue of the trial. Probably they yet hoped that he would be acquitted, being slow to believe all which had been written in the prophets, and said by himself, respecting his sufferings and death.

59. *All the council*; literally, *even the whole Sanhedrim*. Luke (22: 66) says that this took place at early dawn. This renders it almost certain, that the examination narrated in John 18: 19-24, took place previously, probably at the house of Annas, to whom Jesus was first sent, or else the palace of Caiaphas, before the members of the Sanhedrim had fully assembled. It was immediately preceding, and during this preliminary examination, that Peter denied his Lord. Compare John 18: 15-27. *Sought false witnesses.* Under the Mosaic law, it was necessary to establish criminal charges by at least two witnesses. In capital trials the parties concerned were also put under oath (1 Sam. 14: 37-43). As no true charges could be brought against Jesus, they were obliged to hunt up false testimony. This was found to be no easy task from the discrepancy, which almost always exists between those who perjure themselves. The knowledge of our Lord's wondrous miracles and high character as a prophet, kept many from giving direct testimony against him, who would otherwise have been ready to do this, in order to ingratiate themselves with the Sanhedrim. It must be borne in mind, that the council did not professedly seek *false* witness, but were in search of condemning evidence, caring not whether it were true or false, provided it were against him. They sheltered themselves in this by the notion, that an idolater, false prophet, or impostor, might be proved guilty by any testimony, whether true or false, in order to secure a legal condemnation. This



elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;

60 But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came <sup>d</sup> two false witnesses,

61 And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple

<sup>c</sup> Ps. 27 : 12, & 35 : 11; Ma. 14 : 55; So Ac. 6 : 13. <sup>d</sup> De. 19 : 15. <sup>e</sup> Ch. 27 : 40; Jn. 2 : 19.

whole trial shows that the proposal of Judas had hurried matters, or else they would have previously prepared and tutored their witnesses. *To put him to death.* Their object was to convict him of a capital offence, and hence they sought witnesses to this effect.

60. *But found none.* Their testimony either fell short of what was necessary to secure conviction, or was too discordant to be of any value. *Yea though many;* literally and (i. e. even) *though many,* &c. An emphatic antithesis. See N. on 12 : 12. Many offered themselves as witnesses, but when put to the test, either through the alarm of an awakened conscience, failed to manufacture evidence sufficient for his conviction, or were so bereft of their usual cunning, that they crossed themselves and disagreed with one another (Mark 14 : 56), and thus rendered their testimony worthless. In this we have evidence, not only of the perfect innocence of our Lord, but of the divine interposition in protecting that innocence from the aspersions of wicked men. The repetition of the words *they found none,* gives emphasis to the worthlessness and rottenness of the testimony hitherto given in the trial. *At last,* when they had begun to despair of success in hunting up such evidence against him.

61. *This fellow.* The word *fellow* and *man,* in a parallel phrase (27 : 47), are omitted in the original, but express well the contempt implied in the Greek pronoun. It is as though the finger pointed him out, he not being worthy to be named or even looked at. The words of our Savior, which these false witnesses

of God, and to build it in three days.

62 <sup>f</sup> And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against thee?

63 But <sup>g</sup> Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, <sup>h</sup> I adjure thee

<sup>f</sup> Ma. 14 : 60. <sup>g</sup> Is. 53 : 7; Ch. 27 : 12, 14. <sup>h</sup> Le. 5 : 1; 1 Sa. 14 : 24, 26.

marred and perverted, are narrated in John 2 : 19, and could by no means have been referred by those who heard him, to the destruction of the temple. That the chief priests themselves did not so understand him, is evident from 27 : 63. *I am able to destroy.* Here was a perversion of his words, as will be seen by referring to John as above quoted. *Of God.* This was added to heighten the enormity of the offence, in speaking thus of the temple. In Mark they add, "that is made with hands," an expression which he never used, and which they would not have added, had it not been well understood at that time that he spake of his body. Mark also adds, that "neither so did their witness agree together." Perhaps Matthew narrates the testimony of one, and Mark that of the other. There were, doubtless, other points of disagreement. Thus this attempted proof of his having spoken irreverently of the temple and predicted its destruction, fell to the ground by the disagreement of the witnesses.

62. The high priest despairing of being able to convict Jesus on such testimony, now changes his plan, and endeavors to entrap him by a direct examination. *Arose* to give his question more authority. *Answerest thou nothing?* This question was put as though something had been proved, which required from Jesus a denial or justifying plea, although the high priest well knew that there was nothing in all this false swearing, which demanded an answer. The design to ensnare Jesus was so apparent that he made no reply.

63. *And the high priest,* &c. We find in Luke 22 : 67-69, that the high

by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said : nevertheless, I say unto you, 'Hereafter shall ye see

*i* Da. 7 : 13; Ch. 16 : 27, & 24 : 30; Lu. 21 : 27, & 25 : 31; John 1 : 51; Ro. 14 : 10; 1 Th. 4 : 16; Re. 1 : 7.

priest continued his interrogatories, by inquiring of Jesus whether he was the Christ. It was in reference to what Jesus then said, that he proceeds to adjure him by the living God, to declare plainly whether he was the Christ. *I adjure thee.* A most solemn form of administering an oath. In capital trials, the criminal himself might be put under oath (see N. on v. 59). When put in this interrogative form, the accused person was bound to reply, and his answer was regarded as made on oath. *Living God.* See N. on 16 : 16. *Whether thou be, &c.* This question was artfully framed. If our Lord replied in the affirmative, they were ready to charge him with blasphemy; if in the negative, they would accuse him to the people as an impostor. In either case, they were sure of his conviction. But it is manifest, that if the mere declaration of one's Messiahship in itself constituted blasphemy, no one could ever lay claim to the office, without incurring that charge. Christ's works and doctrines were a proof of his divine mission, and to this proof they should have given their attention, before they pronounced him guilty of blasphemy in assuming to be the Messiah. By the phrase *the Christ the Son of God*, they meant *the Messiah*. It is not to be supposed that they attached to the words their high and full import, such as was involved in the reply of our Lord. Their views of the Messiah were low and temporal.

64. *Thou hast said.* This was a solemn affirmation of the truth involved in the question. Alford thinks that reference is also had to previous convictions and admissions of Caiaphas himself (John 11 : 49, 50). But this is not

the Son of man <sup>k</sup>sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

65 'Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further

*k* Ps. 110 : 1; Ac. 7 : 55. *l* 2 Ki. 18 : 37, & 19 : 1.

very probable. In Mark the answer is *I am*, conforming more to our method of reply. *Nevertheless*, i. e. besides, furthermore. The general idea is that a sign of his Messiahship shall be given, in addition to his solemn declaration. *Hereafter*; literally, *from now*. The days of his humiliation were now about to end. Henceforth he would be seen only in a state of exaltation and glory. In reference to the sublime appearance of our Savior in the clouds of heaven, see N. on 24 : 30. The expression *on the right hand of power*, is equivalent to saying, *on the right hand of God* (the abstract being put for the concrete), or *clothed with divine power*. This in 24 : 30, is denoted by the words, "with power and great glory." What a claim to be put forth by this meek and helpless man, in the presence of his powerful malignant enemies. What a reversal of their relative position, when he shall appear in all the glory of his Godhead, surrounded by his mighty angels, to take vengeance on his enemies, and to establish on an unshaken foundation his Messianic kingdom.

65. *Rent his clothes.* It was forbidden the high priest to rend his garments (Levit. 21 : 10), but that may refer to the usual mourning for the dead (see Levit. 10 : 6), or it may have reference to his priestly robes, which he put on when officiating in his priestly capacity. In the present instance, he rent his clothes, as though struck with pious horror at such impious blasphemy. The garment was usually rent from top to bottom, although sometimes in the opposite direction. *He hath spoken blasphemously* in claiming to be the Son of God. Had our Lord been an impostor, this would have been true. Words

need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

66 What think ye? They an-

*m* Le. 24 : 16 ; Jno. 19 : 7.

more blasphemous can hardly be conceived, if they were those of a mere man, and not one who possessed a divine as well as a human nature. *What further need, &c.* They truly needed no further witnesses. But they stood in need of an humble, teachable, candid temper, to examine the claims of our Lord to the Messiahship, in the light of the wondrous miracles he had wrought, and the purity and spirituality of his doctrines. It was the want of this disposition to get at the truth, which caused them to pronounce him guilty of blasphemy, and to pass sentence upon him as one worthy of death.

66. *What think ye?* This was a form of putting the question. The high priest assumed that our Lord was guilty of blasphemy, and proceeded at once to demand sentence of condemnation. In all this there was an absence, not only of the spirit, but of the common forms of justice, in the haste with which the Sanhedrim were pressed to pronounce sentence of death upon him, and their ready response to the wishes of the high priest. *He is guilty of death*; literally, *he is held fast of death, he is a subject of death*, i. e. to him belong the pain and penalty of death. The punishment of blasphemy was death by stoning (Lev. 24 : 16), to inflict which they must have obtained leave of the Roman governor. This they could easily have done. But they resorted to another mode of inflicting death, probably from the following considerations. Punishment by stoning must necessarily have been attended by a vast concourse of Jews, from whom they had reason to apprehend a rescue of their prisoner (see 26 : 5 ; Mark 14 : 2 ; Luke 22 : 2 ; 23 : 27). This would be avoided by giving him up to the Romans, to be punished in their way, and under their authority. The punish-

swered and said, <sup>m</sup> He is guilty of death.

67 <sup>n</sup> Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him ; and <sup>o</sup> oth-

*n* Is. 50 : 6, & 53 : 3 ; Ch. 27 : 30.

*o* Lu. 22 : 63 ; Jno. 19 : 3.

ment by the cross, in which the victim died an agonizing and prolonged death, furnished them also with greater opportunity to feast their eyes with his sufferings, and insult him as he hung before them (see 27 : 39-44 ; Mark 15 : 29-32 ; Luke 23 : 35-37).

A question sometimes arises in the mind, whether no friendly voice in behalf of Jesus was raised in this council, to protect him against such injustice, and undue haste. Doubtless there was, if at least Nicodemus, or Joseph of Arimathea, or we should hope if Gamaliel were present. But either their feeble remonstrances were drowned in the general clamor against him, or they were passed by in this nocturnal session of the Sanhedrim, and not summoned to the council. The former would seem the true supposition from Luke 23 : 51, so far at least as Joseph was concerned. Nicodemus, if present, doubtless urged a principle of justice, which he had laid down with such effect on a former occasion (John 7 : 50, 51). But with these exceptions, the whole council most likely were united in the sentence pronounced against him.

67. They now commence to heap upon him the vilest indignities. *Then did they spit, &c.* This in ancient as well as in modern times, was deemed one of the greatest insults which could be offered. In this and the other indignities, the members of the Sanhedrim, as well as the common people, participated (see Mark 14 : 65 ; Luke 22 : 63, 64). *And buffeted him* ; literally, *struck him with the fist*, in contradistinction to the act, designated in the next clause by smiting him with the palms of their hands, which in the original answers very well to our word *slap*, as with the open hand. These represent the variety of ways, by which they put him to pain, and expressed their contempt of him.

ers smote *him* with the palms of their hands,

68 Saying, <sup>p</sup> Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee ?

69 ¶ <sup>q</sup> Now Peter sat without

<sup>p</sup> Ma. 14 : 65 ; Lu. 22 : 64.

Not only the hand but the foot may have been used, in the insults here heaped upon him.

68. *Saying, prophecy, &c.* This was done to deride his claims to the Messiahship. So while he hung on the cross, they tauntingly said: "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross" (27 : 40); "let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe" (Mark 15 : 32). Here they bid him, having been previously blindfolded, to tell who struck him, as an evidence of his being the Christ. The word *prophecy* means here simply *declare*. But as the declaration was in regard to a thing concealed from the natural eye, it implied a revelation to the mind by some superior intelligence. It might well be rendered here, *divine unto us, thou Christ* (spoken sarcastically), *who is he that smote thee?* Luke says, "many other things blasphemously spake they against him." A remarkable expression in connection with the fact, that they had just sentenced him to death for blasphemy. There was blasphemy, and that too of the most appalling kind, but it lay on *their* souls, in thus rejecting and putting to shame and suffering the eternal Son of God.

69-75. PETER THRICE DENIES JESUS. *Jerusalem.* Night introducing the sixth day of the Week. Mark 14 : 66-72; Luke 22 : 54-62; John 18 : 15-18; 25-27.

69. The three denials of Peter are related by Matthew and Mark after the trial of Jesus, but by Luke and John, before. They doubtless took place while the trial was going on, although narrated together for the sake of convenience. *Sat without*, i. e. outside of the apartment, in which Jesus was ex-

in the palace : and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

70 But he denied before *them* all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

<sup>q</sup> Ma. 14 : 66 ; Lu. 22 : 55 ; Jo. 18 : 16, 17, 25.

amined. Mark says *beneath*, in reference to the slight elevation of the room, where the high priest was questioning Jesus. *In the palace.* In the open court, around which were the apartments of the palace (see N. on v. 58). *A damsel.* A maid servant. She was the portress. See John 18 : 16, 17. Females often performed this service. Compare Acts 12 : 13. *Came unto him.* She approached him to scan his features more closely. Luke says, "she earnestly looked upon him." She had seen him at some former time with Jesus, or such concern was now depicted on his countenance, that her suspicions were excited that he was one of his followers. *Thou also wast, &c.* John puts this in an interrogative form, a very common mode, when the answer is conceived as being certain beyond a doubt. The word *also*, found in all the Evangelists, has led many to suppose that John, who was with Peter, was known as Jesus' disciple, or had acknowledged himself to be such. The words may have been used, however, in reference to Jesus himself, as though she had said : Jesus of Nazareth is now on trial, and thou also art one of his company. *With Jesus of Galilee*, i. e. one of his party. *To be with one* is often used in the ancient writings in the sense, *to be on one's side*. The damsel expressed her suspicions to others, before she addressed Peter (Luke).

70. *But he denied.* See N. on v. 34. *Before them all.* He spoke openly and boldly, the more effectually to screen himself from all further suspicion of belonging to the party of Jesus. In the same loud and boisterous tones, the subsequent denials were doubtless uttered, all of which reached the ear of



71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and said unto them that

his Master, in the adjacent apartment. *I know not*, &c. This was one of the strongest forms of denial. He professed the most profound ignorance of the nature or foundation of the charge made against him. The answer of Peter, as given in the various Evangelists, differs in words but not in sense. In his strong desire to free himself from all suspicion, he may have reiterated his denial in the various forms here given. It should be noted that Mark, who is supposed to have written his gospel under the eye of Peter himself, so far from extenuating the denial of the apostle, gives a fuller account of it, than any other of the Evangelists. See N. on v. 34.

71. *When he was gone out*, &c. Peter was ill at ease, when he found himself in such danger of being recognized, and retreated from the open court to the porch or entrance-way (see N. on v. 58), where he might watch the proceedings of the trial with less danger of exposure. Soon after his departure from the court, according to Mark, the cock crew. This was his first crowing, and is spoken of by Mark, because in his gospel it is stated that Jesus said, "before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." Peter could not have heard this first crowing of the cock with unconcern, but he was not yet brought from his state of presumption and self-confidence, to one of penitence and reliance upon his Lord and Savior. *Another maid*. She was doubtless a portress, or one who attended upon the duties of the porch. Mark says that *the same maid* (incorrectly translated in our common version, *a maid*) *saw him again*. She may have followed him into the porch, or Peter, when closely pressed by those in the porch, may have returned into the open court, and exposed himself again to the notice of the maid whose suspicions were first awakened. The word translated

were there, *This fellow* was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

*another*, is put by Luke in the masculine gender. It would appear by a comparison of Mark and Luke, that one of the men, to whom the maid-servant had communicated her suspicions of Peter, directly charged him with being one of the company of Jesus. Thus while hoping to escape observation by retreating from the open court, he fell in with others who repeated the charge. These reiterated recognitions were of course met with as oft-repeated denials, so that, as Alford remarks, "he spoke not one sentence only, but a succession of vehement denials." In reference however to the three occasions on which he was recognized during the night, he is said to have thrice denied his Lord, "each occasion embracing reiterated and importunate denials" (Alford). *This fellow*. See N. on v. 61. *Jesus of Nazareth*. In v. 69, *Jesus of Galilee*. This was added by way of reproach.

72. *And again he denied*, &c. In John this second denial took place in the open court, as they were standing around the fire. But this is easily explained, if we suppose that Peter, through restlessness of mind, or the greater danger of detection in the porch, had re-entered the open court. The second denial may have taken place, as has been intimated (N. on v. 71), both in the portico and the open court. This appears to have been the fact, both from a comparison of this statement of John with that of the other Evangelists, and also from the assertion of Mark, that it was the same damsel, who on seeing him again reiterated her first charge, which could not have been done, unless she had followed him into the porch, or he had returned (as is evident from John) into the open court. There is one other mode of reconciling these apparent discrepancies. What appears in John to have been the second denial, may

73 And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech betrayeth thee.

r Lu. 22: 59.

have been a portion of the third, the second having been omitted by him, on the ground of its having been so fully related by the other Evangelists. It must always be borne in mind, that omission involves no contradiction, and that there would have been no need of four gospels, if the same events, in the same order and fulness of narration, had been related by them all. The great facts of this fall of Peter, are recorded in all the Evangelists, and the trifling variation in the phraseology, is nothing more than could be expected by independent writers, especially if, as is true beyond question, on each occasion Peter reiterated his denial in various forms, and with a change of locality, at least so far as the second is concerned. *With an oath.* Such an alarming publicity was now given to the charge of his being in the company of Jesus, that Peter felt the necessity of warding off suspicion, by more vehement protestations of his total ignorance of the man. He confirmed his denial at this time with an oath.

73. *And after a while.* "About an hour after." Luke. The scene of the third denial was in the open court, as it was within sight and hearing of Jesus (Luke 22: 61). It may be thought wonderful, that Peter did not leave at once the high priest's house. Perhaps he thought it more prudent to brave it out with stout denials, than by stealing away, to admit virtually the truth of these charges. He had also at heart such deep affection for his Lord, that he could not prevail upon himself to leave him. We may well suppose, that he was all this time in a most unenviable frame of mind, although it was not until his Lord looked upon him, that he became so fully conscious of the enormity of his sin, as to go forth and weep bitter tears of repentance. *For*

74 Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

75 And Peter remembered the

s Ma. 14: 71.

*thy speech, &c.* The provincial dialect of the Galileans compared with that of the inhabitants of Judea, according to the Rabbinical writers, was broad and unpolished. In addition to his coarse Galilean dialect, a kinsman of Malchus whose right ear Peter had cut off, directly affirmed that he saw Peter in the garden (John 18: 26).

74. *Then began he, &c.* He was irritated and alarmed by these repeated charges, and by his identification by the kinsman of Malchus. Giving way to his naturally quick and vehement temper, he poured forth a volley of curses and imprecations, regardless of all consequences, so far as Jesus was within sight and hearing. *To curse;* literally, *to anathematize.* He invoked curses upon himself, if what he said was not true. *And to swear* probably by the name of Jehovah, or some such oaths as were forbidden in 5: 34-36. His language must have been shocking, even to the rabble by whom he was surrounded. Nothing saved Peter at this time from irretrievable ruin, but the unchanging love of his Lord. He had prayed for his erring disciple, and Satan was not permitted to effect his destruction (see Luke 22: 31, 32). *Immediately the cock crew.* This was his second crowing, or that which takes place about the break of day. It was while he was yet speaking that the cock crew (Luke).

75. *And Peter remembered, &c.* How must his soul have been overwhelmed, at the recollection of what his Lord had said. It was recalled to his mind, not only by the crowing of the cock, but by the tender and expressive look given him (Luke 22: 61) by his Master, whom he had been denying with cursing and swearing. He now thinks of nothing else. The Sanhedrim, the false witnesses, the jeering

word of Jesus, which said unto him, 'Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

#### CHAPTER XXVII.

**W**HEN the morning was come, "all the chief priests and

*t* Ver. 34; Ma. 14: 30; Lu. 22: 61, 62; John 13: 38.

crowd, are all lost sight of in that look which had pierced his soul. He has no further business in the palace of the high priest. He is unworthy to stay any longer in the presence of his Lord. Had he offered himself to death in his Master's service, it could not have atoned for his sin, or restored peace to his soul. *He went out and wept bitterly.* He sought some place by himself, and all that day, while his Master hung on the cross, and John, who had shown no such pusillanimous conduct, was suffered to be with him to receive his last words, Peter was probably weeping and praying in the depths of his distress, for the pardon of his great sin. But Jesus heard the prayer of his weeping, repentant disciple, and the words of the angel to the woman at the sepulchre, "go tell his disciples and *Peter,*" were an announcement that he was restored to the favor and position with his Lord, which he had for a season forfeited. Henceforth we see in him no traces of a timorous spirit, but his courage and boldness, when brought before the Jewish rulers, were such as to inspire his fellow disciples with a like intrepidity, and thus he was the means of strengthening his brethren (Luke 22: 32).

#### CHAP. XXVII.

4-14. JESUS LED TO PILATE. JUDAS REPENTS AND HANGS HIMSELF. *Sixth day of the Week.* Jerusalem. Mark 15: 1-5; Luke 23: 1-5; John 28: 28-38; Acts 1: 18, 19.

1. *When the morning, &c.* They had previously adjudged him worthy of death. Their purpose in the present consultation was, doubtless, to devise

elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.

2 And when they had bound him, they led *him* away, and <sup>b</sup> delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

*a* Ps. 2: 2; Ma. 15: 1; Lu. 22: 66, & 28: 1; Jno. 18: 23. *b* Ch. 20: 19; Ac. 3: 13.

some way of effecting this without exciting a popular commotion. Some think that the place of this consultation was the temple, but it appears evident from Luke, that they did not leave the palace of Caiaphas, until they led him to Pilate. Others have supposed a recess, but this was unlikely, when such revenge and hate were to be gratified. They, doubtless, put Jesus out of the room, while they plotted in secret conclave, the best and safest method of effecting his death. *To put him to death,* i. e. in what way to do this. Stoning, as has been remarked (N. on 26: 66), was the penalty incurred by blasphemy. But this kind of punishment they dared not adopt, through fear of the people. As the power of inflicting capital punishment had been taken away from the Sanhedrim (see John 18: 31), whatever mode of putting him to death they might adopt, it would have to receive the sanction of the Roman governor. One item of consultation, and not the least important, was what charge they should make against him at the judgment seat of Pilate. In selecting a crime with which to charge him, it was a matter of much importance to fix upon one of such atrocity, that the governor could not well pardon him, and thus frustrate their schemes of revenge. They, therefore, shifted the charge from blasphemy, on which they had condemned him, to the crime of sedition (Luke 23: 2), knowing well that a Roman governor would feel bound to take cognizance of such an offence, while he would be disposed to pass lightly over the sin of blasphemy.

2. *And when they had bound him.* As he had been previously bound (John 18:

3 ¶ Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty

c Ch. 26: 14, 15.

12), we must refer this to their making his bonds tighter and more secure, in order that he might appear to Pilate as a desperate person, against whose escape more than ordinary precaution was to be observed. Some think, however, that his previous bonds had been removed temporarily during his examination. But this was very unlikely. *Delivered him* as a criminal. *Pontius Pilate*, who has attained to such unenviable notoriety from having crucified the Savior of mankind, was the fifth Roman procurator or governor of Judea, and although subordinate to the president of Syria, yet as that personage could give no personal attention to the affairs of Judea, he was clothed with presidential powers, even to the infliction of capital punishment. He entered upon his office, A.D. 26, and held it about ten years, at which time having become exceedingly obnoxious to the Jews and Samaritans, on account of his cruelty and extortion, he was accused to Vitellius, president of Syria, and sent by him to Rome, to answer before the emperor the charges made against him. He is said to have been banished by Caligula to Vienna in Gaul, and there to have died by his own hand. While in Judea, his ordinary place of residence was at Cæsarea, but he was now at Jerusalem, to guard against popular outbreaks during the feast. *The governor*. Thus he is styled also by Josephus, although, as has been remarked, he was subordinate to the president of Syria. *Then Judas, &c.* Dr. Robinson very correctly places this repentance and suicide of Judas, after our Lord had been delivered by Pilate to be crucified. As the account is peculiar to Matthew, we have no clue to the time from the other gospels. It is not probable, however, that our Lord's trial and condemnation in the palace of Caiaphas, would have wrought such horror and remorse in the soul of the

pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent

traitor. But that he should be brought before the Roman governor, and condemned to be crucified, was so far beyond the anticipated consequences of his treachery, that he awakens to the enormity of his crime, and is overwhelmed in the depths of despair. *Repented himself*. This word is used both here and in 2 Cor. 7 : 8, of one who has sorrow and regret for a sinful act. In the case of Judas, it was accompanied by the most dreadful remorse. But his repentance was not genuine, or what is termed evangelical, as is clear from his act of self-destruction, and the awful words of our Lord respecting him in 26 : 24, and what is said also in John 17 : 12 ; Acts 1 : 25. Evangelical repentance is always expressed by another word in the New Testament, denoting not merely sorrow and remorse, but a change of mind or purpose. The repentance of Judas was like that of Saul, and thousands of others, a sorrow for wrong doing in view of its immediate consequences, but not a hatred of sin in itself considered, as is wrought by true repentance. See 2 Cor. 7 : 10, 11. *Brought again*; literally, *brought back, returned*. *Thirty pieces of silver*. See N. on 26 : 15. *To the chief priests, &c.* After Pilate had delivered up Jesus to be put to death, it would seem that the Sanhedrim adjourned to the temple, as Doddridge well remarks, to keep up an appearance of piety, before they followed the multitude to Calvary to witness the execution.

4. *I have sinned*. Judas now began to feel convictions of sin, which, not leading to genuine repentance, wrought such despair in him, that he put an end to his life. *Innocent blood*, i. e. the blood of an innocent man, put here by a common figure of speech, for the person himself (see 23 : 35). The article *the* is wanting in the original, and should not have been inserted in the English



blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and de-

α2 Sa. 17 : 23; Ac. 1 : 18.

translation. This testimony of Judas, following, as it does, close upon Pilate's repeated declaration, "I find no fault in him," places the innocence of Jesus, if regarded only in the light of the trial, beyond a doubt. Judas had been on the most intimate terms with him for three years, and had he uttered treasonable words against the Romans, or done any thing against the Jewish polity or religion worthy of death, he could not but have known it. *What is that to us?* The brevity of the original (literally, *what to us?*) imparts great point to the contemptuous sneer, with which they replied to the heart-rending confession of Judas. *See thou to that; literally, thou wilt see.* It is your business. We have nothing to do with it. Judas received no sympathy or word of comfort from the chief priests. How many like him find to their sorrow, that it was the *treason*, and not the *traitor*, which was loved.

5. *And he cast down; literally, and having thrown the money* into the holy place, where the priests only might enter. Judas stood without this apartment, and therefore *threw* the money in at the priests' feet. Their cold and unfeeling reply showed that he had nothing to expect from them, and hoping by a restitution of his iniquitous wages, to gain peace of mind, or at least some alleviation of his mental distress, he threw down his money and departed from the temple. *And went and hanged himself.* We are not told how long a time intervened, between his departure from the temple and his suicide. The one event doubtless followed close upon the other. No relief was obtained from giving up his ill-gotten gains. His mental distress increased. His soul was filled with despair. Unlike Peter, who went out to weep, and pray, and implore forgiveness, he went forth to put an end to his

parted, and went and hanged himself.

6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is

existence, and to rush unbidden into the presence of his offended Maker. Thus he added crime to crime, and died and went to his own place, while Peter, confirmed in the love of his Lord, and rendered more courageous by his temporary weakness, fulfilled his mission on earth to the praise and glory of God. In respect to the manner of Judas' death, there seems no difficulty in reconciling it with the account given in Acts 1 : 18, where it is said, that "falling headlong he burst asunder." In hanging himself, the cord by which he was suspended probably broke, and he fell with such violence, as to cause his bowels to burst out. Thus in Matthew we have recorded the kind of death, which he went forth to inflict upon himself; and in Acts, that by which he really died. We may well suppose too that the rope did not break, before his weight had caused it to be drawn so tight, as to cause strangulation, if his neck was not broken thereby. Thus his death was rendered more awful, by the twofold mode in which it was effected. Howe (*Orient. Scenes*, p. 270) says, "as we walked along the margin of the precipitous ledges, which overhang this valley of Tophet, we clearly saw how to reconcile the accounts respecting the tragic end of Judas Iscariot, which we find in the gospels, with Acts 1 : 18. If the cord by which the despairing man suspended himself in the perpetration of this *felo de se*, was attached to the brittle limb of an olive tree, near the margin of these precipitous ledges, when vitality ceased [or before], the ponderous weight of the body might break the limb, and falling headlong he might burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gush out."

6. *And the chief priests, &c.* It is not to be supposed that they did this, at the very time in which Judas returned the money. They had more impor-

not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

e Ac. 1; 19.

tant business to occupy their time and thoughts. They waited at least until after our Lord was crucified, before they purchased "the field of blood." *It is not lawful*, &c. Compare Deut. 23 : 18. They were right in supposing that money thus obtained, would be an abomination unto God. But they ought to have gone further, and inquired whether their whole conduct in this affair, was not still more reprehensible in the sight of a just and holy God. In this transaction, as in others of a similar kind, they "strained out a gnat and swallowed a camel," thus showing their gross hypocrisy. *The treasury*; literally, *the sacred treasure*, the thing contained being put, by a common figure of speech, for that which contained it. The chests where these treasures were kept, was in the court of the women. *It is the price of blood*, i. e. that with which a man's death was procured. *Blood* is often used in the sense of *life*. It has however in this place the sense of *bloodshed*, *loss of life*.

7. *Took counsel*, i. e. consulted as to the best way of using the money. *And bought with them* (the pieces of silver) *the potter's field*. In Acts 1 : 18, it is said that "Judas purchased a field with the reward of iniquity." A man is often said to do that of which he is the cause or occasion, or for the accomplishment of which he furnishes the means. No essential disagreement exists, therefore, between the two statements. This field lay south of Jerusalem, across the valley of Hinnom. It had been dug up to supply clay for the potters, and thus having become unfit for tillage, was sold for a small price. *To bury strangers in*. From this circumstance, common burying-places in cities are now frequently called *the potter's field*. By

8 Wherefore that field was called, 'The field of blood, unto this day.

9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, 'And they took the

f Zec. 11 : 12, 13.

*strangers*, is here meant Jews, who came up to Jerusalem from other lands, either on business, or to attend the yearly feasts, and also Gentile foreigners, since a place of burial would of necessity, have to be furnished them, as well as stranger Jews.

8. *That field*, i. e. the one in which Judas had committed suicide. *The field of blood*; Hebrew, *Aceldama*. See Acts 1 : 19. *Unto this day*, i. e. the time when Matthew wrote his gospel.

9. *Then was fulfilled*, &c. This citation is said to be from Jeremiah, but is in reality from Zechariah 11 : 13. This may be accounted for in two ways. One is that, which takes as the true reading, those MSS. which with the Syrian version, the earliest of all, merely have the words *by the prophet*, the word *Jeremiah*, being inserted by some subsequent copyist. The other method of solution supposes Jeremiah to have been put, through mistake of the transcribers, for Zechariah. Such a mistake might have easily crept into the text. As it regards the quotation itself, the prophet had demanded of the Jewish rulers, his wages for feeding the flock. He received thirty pieces of silver. This paltry sum, sarcastically declared to be a goodly price, at which the prophet (i. e. his services) had been prized of them, he is directed to cast to the potter, who was at work near the house of the Lord. This low estimation of the labors of Jehovah's servant, and his rejection of the wages, which was just the very sum paid by the priests to Judas, became a remarkable prediction of the valuation put upon Christ by the chief priests, and the rejection by Judas of the wages of his iniquity. The two events were in these particulars so similar, that the last might be said to

thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value ;

10 And gave them for the pot-

be the fulfilment of the former. *And they took.* In the original prophecy, *And I took.* This in neither case refers to the taking of the money, as first paid to the prophet and to Judas, but to the taking it for final disposal, in the one case by the prophet to give to the potter, and in the other, by the chief priests to purchase the potter's field. *The price of him whom they valued.* Judas said, "what will ye give me? and they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver." This was their valuation of him. Not but that they would have given ten times this sum, rather than not to have got possession of Jesus. But this was the amount offered, and paid to the traitor for his services. The words, "the price of him," &c. are either interjected in the way of explanation by the Evangelists, or they are an expansion of the idea in the preceding verse of the original prophecy, "so they weighed for my price." *Whom they of the children, &c.* In the original, the word *they* is omitted. The literal translation is, *whom* [certain persons, i. e. rulers] *from the children, &c.* This is explanatory of the preceding clause, containing the same idea in an expanded form.

10. *And gave them, &c.* The prophet gave the sum, at which his services were valued, to the potter. The chief priests appropriated the wages of Judas, to the purchase of the potter's field. This is another striking coincidence, and confirms us in the belief, that the evangelist did not use this prophecy by way of accommodation, but that the original transaction was designed to find its complete fulfilment in the history of our Lord's rejection by the Jews. *As the Lord appointed me.* This conforms to the words, with which the verse in the prophecy commences, "and the Lord said unto me." It was

at Jehovah's direction, that the prophet gave his wages to the potter.

11 ¶ And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the

g Ma. 15 : 2 ; Lu. 23 : 3 ; Jno. 18 : 33.

at Jehovah's direction, that the prophet gave his wages to the potter.

11. *And Jesus stood, &c.* John (18 : 28) says that the Jews did not themselves enter the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled. The reason is added, "that they might eat the passover," i. e. celebrate the paschal feast, which began with the eating of the paschal lamb on the evening previous. For further remarks on this extended use of the word passover, see N. on John 18 : 28. Pilate therefore went out to them, and demanded a statement of the crime, wherewith they accused Jesus. Hoping that the general charge of his being a malefactor would suffice to secure his condemnation, they make at first no specific accusation, intimating only that he was a notorious offender (John 18 : 30). But when Pilate was about to remand Jesus to them to be judged by their law, they began to accuse him of sedition, and forbidding to pay tribute to Cæsar, and of claiming to be a king (Luke 23 : 2). This last accusation is presupposed in the question, which the governor, after he had reëntered the prætorium or judgment hall, proposed to Jesus, *Art thou the king of the Jews?* at which point Matthew commences the narration. It appears from John (18 : 34), that before Jesus answered Pilate's question, he asked him whether he proposed this question from personal knowledge of his setting himself up to be a king, or whether he was moved to examine him in relation to it, through the clamorous charges of the Jews. Pilate very scornfully replies, that he is not a Jew to trouble himself with their peculiarities, but that the supreme council of the nation had brought Jesus to him for trial. He then again asks Jesus what he had done (John 18 : 35). Jesus in reply avers his innocence of any design to subvert the authority of Cæsar,



King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, <sup>k</sup>Thou sayest.

12 And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

13 Then saith Pilate unto him,

<sup>h</sup> John 18 : 37 ; 1 Ti. 6 : 13.

<sup>i</sup> Ch. 26 : 63 ; Jno. 19 : 9.

saying that his kingdom was not of this world, else would his servants fight in his defence (John 18 : 36). Upon this, Pilate again inquiring whether he was a king, received from him the emphatic affirmation *thou sayest* (see N. on 26 : 64), after which follows our Lord's declaration, as to the nature of his mission, and Pilate's inquiry, "what is truth?" as narrated in John 18 : 37, 38. This portion of the trial is reported with much more fulness by John, than by the other evangelists, showing that he was an eye-witness, and close observer of the whole proceedings.

12. *And when he was accused, &c.* It appears that Pilate, after proposing to Jesus the inquiry, "what is truth?" brought him forth again to the Jews, declaring that he found no fault with him (John 18 : 38), whereupon the Jews clamorously accused him, as is here related by Matthew. The reader should endeavor to obtain a full and connected view of the trial of Jesus, by gathering up from the different evangelists all the incidents relating thereto, and forming them into one connected, harmonious whole, so that they may be all taken up in their proper order. *He answered nothing.* These subtle and malignant enemies, conscious of his innocence, and yet so bent on his death, were deserving of no reply. Nor, as far as Pilate himself was concerned, did our Lord deem it necessary to say any thing further, since he had just informed him of the nature of his kingdom and mission (John 18 : 36-38).

13. *Then saith Pilate, &c.* He wished to get some further information, on which he could either convict or acquit Jesus. His curiosity also may have been so awakened by the previous words of our Lord, that he hoped

<sup>k</sup> Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?

14 And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

15 <sup>l</sup> Now at *that* feast, the go-

<sup>k</sup> Ch. 26 : 62 ; Jno. 19 : 10.

<sup>l</sup> Ma. 15 : 6 ; Lu. 23 : 17 ; John 18 : 39.

to hear something further upon the theme, on which he had touched (John 18 : 37). But from this time on through the whole trial, except in one instance related by John (19 : 12), he maintained a silence, broken by no question, pain, or indignity. Compare Isa. 53 : 7. *They witness against thee.* Pilate used language not strictly true, inasmuch as no proof was advanced of the truth of their charges. He seems to have used the word *testify*, instead of *accuse*, in order thereby to incite Jesus to make some reply.

14. *He answered him, &c.* literally, *he made no reply in reference to not one word* (i. e. charge or accusation), the two negatives not neutralizing each other, as in English, but after Greek usage constituting an emphatic negation. *Marvelled greatly.* This silence was so unusual in a criminal charged with an offence, which in a few hours might consign him to the cross, that Pilate could not account for it. Our Savior's meek and solemn deportment, so different from that of a bold, ambitious man who was leading a seditious mob, or a hardened criminal who had consorted with thieves and robbers, must also have arrested the governor's attention, and caused him to wonder why the Jewish rulers were so exasperated against him.

15-26. PILATE SEEKS TO RELEASE JESUS, BUT THE JEWS DEMAND BARABBAS. *Jerusalem.* Sixth day of the Week. Mark 15 : 6-15 ; Luke 23 : 13-25 ; John 18 : 39, 40.

15. Pilate now attempts to release Jesus, but previous to this some incidents are related by Luke (23 : 4-12), which are essential to the thread of the narrative. After the governor had endeavored in vain to get some reply



vernor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would.

16 And they had then a not-

from Jesus to the accusation of the rulers, he once more declared publicly to the chief priests and the people, that he found no fault with him (Luke 23: 4). Upon this they became still more fierce, and charged him with seditious teaching, through the whole country from Galilee to Jerusalem. Pilate then inquired if he were a Galilean, and, on learning this to be the fact, he sent him to Herod, as properly belonging to his jurisdiction. This prince was then at Jerusalem, and Pilate hoped, by referring the matter to him, to get rid of what threatened to be a troublesome affair. But Herod, although at first greatly pleased at seeing Jesus, hoping to see some stupendous display of his miraculous power, yet, when he could obtain no reply whatever to his questions, and heard the vehement accusations of the priests and scribes, who had followed Jesus to accuse him, treated him with great indignity, arraying him in mock robes of royalty, in derision of his claiming to be a king, and thus sending him again to Pilate. It was then that the Roman governor, having called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, who had accused Jesus, solemnly declared him innocent of the charges brought against him, and proposed to elastise him (hoping by this inferior punishment to appease the rage of his enemies), and then to set him at liberty, in accordance with the custom, that at the feast one criminal at least was to be released (Luke 23: 13-16). It is at this point that Matthew again takes up the narration.

*At that feast*, i. e. the feast of the pass-over. *Was wont to release*. It is uncertain by whom, or how long this custom had been established. Whether the boon was first granted by the Syrian kings, or Roman governors, it was, doubtless, intended to make the yoke of servitude less galling and oppressive. Such acts

able prisoner, called Barabbas.

17 Therefore, when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I

of clemency in modern times, frequently grace the accession of a prince to the throne, or some great and joyous state occasion. Pilate was so desirous to release Jesus, of whose innocence he was thoroughly convinced, and in respect to whom, we have hardly a doubt, he felt a strange and undefinable awe, that he sought to avail himself of this opportunity to bring it about. *Unto the people*, i. e. at their desire, or for their pleasure. *Whom they would*. It mattered not how great or manifold his crimes, if the people desired it, the criminal was released.

16. *And they* (i. e. the Roman authorities) *had then a notable prisoner*. He was notorious for his crimes, being a robber (John 18: 40), and a murderer (Mark 15: 7; Luke 23: 19), and was then in custody with others, who, together with him, had been guilty of insurrection in the city, and of whom he had most likely been leader. *Barabbas*, i. e. *son of the father*, a name not unusual among the Jews.

17. *When they had been gathered together*, in obedience to the summons of Pilate, after Jesus had been sent back by Herod (Luke 23: 13). *Whom will ye, &c.* This was after Pilate's official declaration of our Lord's innocence (Luke 23: 14-16), and the people, from the hint given by him of his readiness to release Jesus, had begun to clamorously demand the release of one of the prisoners. Pilate then seizes upon their request, as a means of freeing Jesus. *Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ*. In his desire to release Jesus, he names as his competitor for this favor, one of the vilest offenders, who then lay under sentence of death. He hoped that they would not hesitate in deciding in favor of Jesus, when the only alternative was the release of so vile a criminal as Barabbas. Instead of *Christ*, we have in Mark and Luke, the words *King of*

release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?

18 (For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.)

19 ¶ When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife

sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

20 <sup>m</sup> But the chief priests and *m* Ma. 15 : 11 ; Lu. 23 : 18 ; Jn. 18 : 40 ; Ac. 3 : 14.

*the Jews.* Both titles were doubtless used, and in such a manner as to show his utter contempt for the pretensions of Jesus.

18. *For he knew, &c.* This was the reason why he exerted himself to effect the release of Jesus. *For envy* of his great popularity with the common people, before whom they perceived that their reputation as religious teachers was fast waning. There is no difficulty in supposing that Pilate was made acquainted with this during the trial, if he had not heard of it before. The Roman authorities kept themselves well informed of what was going on in the land.

19. *When he was set down ; literally, while he was sitting.* This message was probably received, when he had resumed his place on the judgment seat, on the sending back of Jesus by Herod. This doubtless added greatly to Pilate's desire to release Jesus. Indeed there are many indications from Pilate's conduct, of his being impressed with the idea, that there was something very remarkable in the character of the prisoner before him. He would not have so struggled to release one of common bearing. *Judgment seat,* as its name in the original imports, was an elevated place, to which there was an ascent by steps. It was used for various purposes (Acts 12 : 21 ; Neh. 8 : 4), but more frequently, as the tribunal of a judge or magistrate. *Have thou nothing, &c.* literally, (let there be) *nothing to you and that just man.* See N. on 8 : 29. Our English version gives a very exact sense of this idiomatic expression, but not with the terseness and point of the unapproachable Greek. The general sentiment is evidently : 'Have no hand in his condemnation. Endeavor to save him. Free yourself from all partici-

pation in the murderous designs of his enemies.' This Pilate endeavored to do in the manner related in v. 24. The word *just,* must be here taken in the sense of *innocent.* So also in v. 24. The Seventy employ the Greek word in the same sense in Job 9 : 23 ; Prov. 6 : 17. Pilate's wife was convinced, by her remarkable dream and what she had before heard of his wonderful miraculous powers, of the innocence of Jesus, and therefore feared for herself and husband the vengeance of heaven, if he was condemned. *Have suffered many things, i. e. have been greatly distressed. This day.* It was now morning, but the Jewish day began the evening previous. Morning dreams with the ancients were particularly significant and ominous. As it regards this dream of Pilate's wife, the early commentators with the Fathers regarded it as supernatural, but the majority of modern expositors suppose it to have been an ordinary dream. But it is very remarkable, to say the least, that she should have had so distressing a dream about one, whom she had probably never seen, and concerning whose apprehension and trial she could have had no knowledge until she awoke. No wonder that when she found, on inquiry, that the person who was so prominent in her distressing dream, was standing at the tribunal of her husband, and ready to be sentenced to the cross, she became alarmed, and hastily despatched a messenger to her husband, warning him against all participation in the death of Jesus. *On account of him.* Her distress in the dream proceeded from him, as the cause or occasion.

20. *The multitude.* This refers to the rabble who took part in apprehending Jesus, and whose numbers had greatly increased during his trial. It is quite probable that they would have de-

elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

21 The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release

manded the release of Jesus, in preference to such a desperado as Barabbas, had they not been awed and persuaded by the influence of the chief priests to the contrary course. Their conduct in thus demanding the release of Barabbas, instead of one whose advent into the city a little while before, they hailed with hosannas, is regarded by most commentators, as a remarkable example of fickleness and inconstancy. But it is very improbable, that this multitude was composed of those, who attended his triumphal entrance into the city. It is far more likely that Pilate's judgment seat, at this time, was surrounded with low and worthless persons, ready to do the priests' bidding, and gratified with the prospective excitement which the proposed crucifixion of Christ would furnish, than that the company was composed of those sturdy, pious Israelites, who, after the triumphal entrance of Jesus, guarded him so vigilantly and faithfully in the temple, that the chief priests did not dare to openly lay hands upon him.

21. *Whether of the twain* (an old English word for *two*). Pilate now directly proposes the question, which of the two they wished to be released. *They* (i. e. the multitude) *said, Barabbas.* Luke (23 : 18) says that they all shouted together : "*Away with this fellow* (for such is the force of the original. See N. on 26 : 61), *and release unto us Barabbas.*" Now began those frenzied, demoniacal shouts, which in the end prevailed with Pilate, and caused him to consent to a deed, which has consigned his name to infamy, and to which probably he had a greater natural repugnance than to any other of his whole life.

22. *What shall I do, &c.* Pilate still hoped to divert them from their purpose. His question implies his willingness to release both Barabbas and

unto you? They said, Barabbas.

22 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? *They* all say unto him, Let him be crucified.

23 And the governor said, Why,

Jesus, if they wished it. He is willing to do almost any thing to extricate himself from this troublesome business. *With Jesus, which is called, &c.* See N. on v. 17. *They all say, &c.* The rabble are now thoroughly aroused. Nothing but the blood of Jesus will satisfy them. They no longer need to be excited against him by the chief priests. Here again we must enter our protest against the idea, that these were the same persons, who accompanied him from Jericho (20 : 29), or who went forth to meet him on his entrance into the city (John 12 : 18). There were no doubt instances of defection among the professed followers of Jesus; but that the multitude who now cried, "crucify him, crucify him," was composed of entirely different persons from those who shouted hosannas in his presence, a few days before, and who gathered around him in such determined numbers, that the chief priests dared not arrest him, is evident from the whole narration. A mob is a body proverbially fickle. But there were persons enough in the great and populous city of Jerusalem, crowded at this time, as it was, not only with persons who had come up with good intent to the feast, but with money-changers, speculators, and the like, to form a mob against Jesus, without our being under the necessity of grouping with them, men who day after day had gathered around him, and with stern resolution, kept at a distance the priests and rulers, who otherwise would have laid open and violent hands upon him in the temple.

23. *Why, what evil hath he done?* literally, (why so), *for what evil hath he done?* Pilate still continued to urge upon them the release of Jesus, on the ground of his innocence of the charges made against him. According to Luke

what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

24 ¶ When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but *that* rather a tumult was made, he *took water, and washed his*

*n* De. 21 : 6.

(23 : 22), he did this three times. What overwhelming proof is thus furnished from every point in which Christ's trial is viewed, of his entire innocence of the charges. *But they cried out the more.* His reluctance to grant their request only served to exasperate and excite them to demand more fiercely his crucifixion. Luke says, "they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified." They knew that if Jesus was now acquitted, they could never hope for such another opportunity to crush him, and they therefore with the utmost vehemence demanded sentence to be pronounced against him.

24. *That he could prevail nothing*, i. e. that he could do nothing towards effecting his release. *But that rather, &c.* The more he endeavored to save Jesus, the more violent and tumultuous was the multitude who surrounded his tribunal. If he persisted in these efforts, he feared that a public tumult would ensue, which might be disastrous to his own and the Roman interests. *He took water*, i. e. he directed water to be brought. *And washed his hands, &c.* A symbolical and solemn attestation, that he was free from the guilt of Jesus' death. He seems to have adopted a Jewish custom (see Deut. 21 : 6, 7 ; Ps. 26 : 6), to signify his innocence of blood-guiltiness, in order to impress it more forcibly upon the Jews. *I am innocent.* This was not true. It was his duty, as judge and governor, to have delivered Jesus, whom he knew to be innocent, from the hands of these wicked men. But through weakness and timidity he yielded to their wishes, and had all the water on the globe been

hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person : see ye *to it.*

25 Then answered all the people, and said, *His blood be on us, and on our children.*

26 ¶ Then released he Barab-

*o* De. 19 : 10 ; Jos. 2 : 19 ; 1 Ki. 2 : 32 ; 2 Sa. 1 : 16 ; Ac. 5 : 28.

poured upon him, it could not have washed away the stain of innocent blood, with which he was henceforth defiled. *Of this just person.* The same expression with which his wife had characterized Jesus (v. 19). *See ye to it.* Upon you must rest the consequences of this transaction. I wash my hands of all participation in it.

25. *Then answered, &c.* The response was general. From the whole multitude burst forth one of the most terrible imprecations, that ever was uttered. *His blood* (i. e. his death or the consequence of his death) *be on us and on our children.* How truly and fearfully has this been fulfilled. Many of those present lived to see Jerusalem destroyed, and the nation scattered to the four winds of heaven, while to this day, their descendants, whom they included in their curse, and whose rejection of Jesus as their Messiah is as bitter and obstinate, as that of their fathers who crucified the Lord of life and glory, have no country which they call their own, but are wanderers and outcasts upon the face of the earth, looking in vain for the promised deliverer, to reinstate them in the possession of their ancient heritage. No people have ever suffered so many and dreadful persecutions, and yet they have been wonderfully preserved as a distinct race, the monuments of God's wrath, and at the same time, of his protection for the carrying out of his merciful plans, when the Jews shall be brought in with the fulness of the Gentiles (Rom. 11 : 25).

26-30. PILATE DELIVERS UP JESUS TO DEATH. HE IS SCOURGED AND MOCKED. *Jerusalem.* Sixth day of the



bas unto them : and when <sup>r</sup>he had scourged Jesus, he delivered *him* to be crucified.

27 <sup>r</sup> Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the com-

*p* Is. 53 : 5 ; Ma. 15 : 15 ; Lu. 23 : 16, 24, 25 ; Jo. 19 : 1, 16. *q* Ma. 15 : 16 ; John 19 : 2.

Week. Mark 15 : 15-19 ; John 19 : 1-3.

26. *Then released he, &c.* Thus a vile robber and murderer was suffered to go unpunished, while Jesus, against whom the shadow of a crime could not be found, was delivered to his enemies to be crucified. This was Pilate's justice, and this his innocence of the blood of Jesus. *When he had scourged Jesus.* Preliminary to the crucifixion, the victim was scourged, either with rods, or with a whip called *terribile flagellum, the terrible scourge*, made of leathern thongs, and armed with small bones, so that he oftentimes expired under it. With this whip it is probable that Jesus was scourged. It was generally used in the punishment of slaves, and would add therefore to the ignominy, as well as torture, of Jesus. *He delivered him, &c.* Pilate seems to have been present when Jesus was scourged, but now he consigns him to the soldiers to lead him forth to execution. This appears from the next verse, and from Mark 15 : 16. Before he is fully delivered up, however, Pilate makes one more effort (see John 19 : 4-16) to liberate him.

27. *Then the soldiers, &c.* The Roman procurators or governors of Judea were allowed six cohorts, five of which were stationed at Cæsarea, and one in the tower of Antonia at Jerusalem. A cohort (here called *band*) was the tenth part of a legion. A full legion, in the time of Christ, consisted of 6,000 men, which would give to each cohort the number of 600. But sometimes a cohort would, for certain reasons, contain 1000 men or more. *Common hall.* This hall or prætorium, formerly Herod's palace, was a magnificent edifice in the northern part of the upper city, westward of the temple, so as to overlook it. Connected with this palace were

mon hall, and gathered unto him the whole band *of soldiers*.

28 And they stripped him, and <sup>r</sup> put on him a scarlet robe.

29 ¶ <sup>r</sup> And when they had

*r* Lu. 23 : 11. *s* Ps. 69 : 19 ; Is. 53 : 3.

the towers Hippicus, Phasaël, and Mariamne. Here the Roman procurators, whose head-quarters were at Cæsarea, took up their residence, when they visited Jerusalem. Into some court of this palace the Roman soldiers led Jesus. *And gathered, &c.* This was done in order to guard against any attempted rescue of the prisoner.

28. *Stripped him* of the gorgeous robe, in which Herod had arrayed him, and also of his own outer garment. *Scarlet robe.* This was the Roman cloak, which was hung loosely over the body, and confined by a clasp on the left shoulder, so as to leave the right hand unconfined. The cloak, worn by the Roman emperors and high officers, was of fine texture and purple dye. A scarlet or purple (see John 19 : 2) cloak, was put upon Jesus, as the mock emblem of royalty. It was probably a cast-off garment of Pilate, or some other officer of high rank. The color, as given by Matthew, is reconciled with that of Mark and John, by the interchange in our own language of the colors, *purple-red* and *crimson*. In Horace these colors are used interchangeably.

29. *Had platted*, i. e. had braided or twisted together. *A crown.* Another mode of mocking his pretensions to royalty. We discern in all this the instigating hand of the chief priests and rulers, who never lost sight of him, until he expired on the cross. *Of thorns.* Some think that this does not refer to the thorny plant, as given in our English translation, but to a smooth plant, called the *bear's foot*. But the word, in every other instance of its occurrence in the New Testament, has the sense of *thorns*, and when we consider the extreme cruelty and insults heaped upon Jesus, we can hardly doubt, that this crown was made of

platted a crown of thorns, they put *it* upon his head, and a reed in his right hand : and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews !

30 And 'they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own

† Is. 50 : 6 ; Ch. 26 : 67.

the thorn-bush, or some prickly shrub, so as to be the means of pain as well as contempt. *They put it upon his head*, in the form of a wreath or crown. *And a reed* for a sceptre, which kings usually held in the right hand, when they gave audience to their subjects. Light canes or walking-sticks were frequently made of the flexile reed, and one of these was taken from some bystander for this occasion. *Bowed the knee* to deride his kingly pretensions. *And mocked him*. This refers to the scoffing gestures, as well as opprobrious words, with which they insulted him, as they came forward to bend their knee to him. *Hail*. A salutation with which kings and emperors were addressed. It was therefore employed here as a word of mock royalty. *King of the Jews*. An epithet of contempt to Jesus, but a virtual insult to the whole Jewish nation. Its real import was, that like punishment would be inflicted upon any one, who should aspire to be the king of the Jews, contrary to the will of the Roman emperor.

30. *They spit upon him*. A repetition of the indignity, which he had received after his examination before the high priest (26 : 67). *And took the reed out of his right hand*. *Smote him on the head*, where was bound the crown of thorns. He suffered, therefore, not only from the stunning effects of these blows, but from the thorns which were thereby driven into his head. John says that they smote him with their hands. The reed was therefore caught from his hand, to smite the thorny crown into his head, which could not have been done with the naked hand. One cannot read these indignities heaped upon him, without wondering at his forbearance and love. How easy for

him to have struck them dead in an instant, and to have assumed the terrors and awful majesty of his divine nature. But his mission would not then have been accomplished. The race whom he came to save would have been lost, and he therefore "endured the cross, despising the shame," and drank without a murmur, the cup of suffering prepared for him by his God and Father.

31-34. JESUS LED AWAY TO BE CRUCIFIED. *Jerusalem*. Sixth day of the Week. Mark 15 : 20-23 ; Luke 23 : 26-33 ; John 19 : 16, 17.

31. It appears from John 19 : 4-16, which Dr. Robinson and the best harmonists place here, that Pilate made one more effort, at this stage of the proceedings, to save Jesus. Supposing that the malice of the Jews would be satisfied with the terrible scourging, which he had undergone, and that their pity would be excited by his marks of suffering, he declared again that he found no fault in him, after which bringing him forth he exclaimed, "Behold the man!" See how his body is mangled with scourging, and bruised by the blows of the soldiery. Is not this sufficient? May he not now be released? But at sight of him the chief priests and officers cry out, in one continuous shout, "crucify him, crucify him." Upon their giving as the reason why he ought to die, that he had made himself the Son of God, Pilate was in such fear, that he took Jesus again with him into the judgment-hall, and asked him whence he was. Jesus made no reply, whereupon Pilate, somewhat aroused, asked him why he made no answer to one, who had power to release him or put him to death. Jesus replied that Pilate had no power, except that which was given him from above, and this

raiment on him, " and led him away to crucify *him*.

32 ¶ And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene,

*u* Is. 53 : 7. *x* Nu. 15 : 35. 1 Ki. 21 : 13 ;  
Ac. 7 : 58 ; He. 13 : 12.

made the sin of those who delivered him up the more heinous. The governor then made further efforts to release him, but upon the Jews charging him with being no friend to Cæsar, if he did, he finally brought him forth, and delivered him up to be crucified.

And after they had mocked him, as related in the preceding verse. *They took the robe off.* This refers to the purple robe put in mockery upon him (v. 28). *His own raiment.* Although Jesus came from Herod in the gorgeous robe, in which he had been through mockery arrayed, yet his own garments were sent back, so that he was now arrayed in them for the crucifixion. There is a consistency in all these incidents, which infidelity in vain seeks to impeach. *Led him away* as a criminal for execution.

32. *As they came out of the city.* The Jews inflicted capital punishment without the city. See 1 Kings 21 : 13 ; Acts 7 : 58 ; Heb. 13 : 11-13. In the wilderness the criminal was led forth without the camp (Numb. 15 : 36). The Greeks and Romans had a similar custom. *They found a man, &c.* Jesus bore his own cross (John 19 : 17), and probably becoming weak and faint, through previous mental and physical suffering, they compelled this man from Cyrene, whom they happened to meet, to bear his cross. Luke says that they laid the cross upon Simon, " that he might bear it after Jesus." This has led some to think that Simon sustained one end of the cross, while Jesus, who preceded, bore the other. *Simon by name.* Mark says that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus, persons at that time, doubtless, well known. It is thought that Rufus was the one, to whom a salutation was addressed in Rom. 16 : 13. Alexander is not to be confounded with the coppersmith of that name, referred to in 1 Tim. 1 : 20 ;

Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.

33 <sup>2</sup> And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha,

*y* Ma. 15 : 21 ; Lu. 23 : 26. *z* Ma. 15 : 22 ;  
Lu. 23 : 33 ; Jn. 19 : 17.

2 Tim. 4 : 14. *Compelled, unjustly. To bear his cross.* The cross must have been quite heavy, since the beams of which it was constructed, were of sufficient size and strength to sustain the weight of a man. It was composed of two pieces of wood, placed the one across the other, a short distance from the end, in the form of a †. Upon this, as it lay upon the ground, and sometimes after its erection, the victim was extended, his hands being nailed to the cross piece, and his feet to the upright beam. The cross was then raised, one end being planted firmly in the ground. In order that the weight might not draw too heavily upon the hands, a piece of wood was attached near the centre, upon which, as a kind of seat, the person to be crucified sat, and this gave rise to the expression, *to ride upon the cross.* The feet of the criminal, when the cross was erected, were about a yard from the earth. Crosses were of different forms, some being shaped like the letter X. The victim of this dreadful punishment, which can be traced back as far as the time of Semiramis, sometimes hung for two or three days, before his agonies were ended by death. The corpses were often left a prey to ravenous birds.

33. *Golgotha.* A Hebrew word from the Chaldee, *Gol-goltha*, signifying a *skull-place* ; Latin, *Calvaria*, whence this knoll or eminence is called in Luke *Calvary*. It was probably the place, where malefactors were executed, and received its name from the skulls and bones which were strewed there. The words in Luke, *called a skull* (the literal rendering), have led some of the most critical commentators to conjecture, that the name *skull*, had reference to the shape of this elevation. But this is not consistent with Matthew and Mark, while the commonly received

that is to say, a place of a skull,  
 34 <sup>a</sup> They gave him vinegar  
 to drink, mingled with gall : and  
 when he had tasted *thereof*, he  
 would not drink.

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 69 : 21 : see v. 48.

explanation accords with all three of the evangelists. As it regards the much disputed point of its location, it is pretty clear, that it was just outside of the city, on the north-west side. As the bodies of sacrificial victims were burned without the camp, our Lord, as the great archetype, suffered also without the gate (Heb. 13 : 11, 12). An eminence was usually selected as the place of public punishment, in order that the culprit might be seen by those who gathered together to witness the execution. The epithet *mount*, given to Calvary in subsequent times, is inappropriate, as it was nothing more than a slight eminence.

34. *They gave him vinegar, &c.* Some think that this was a vile drink, given him in derision by the soldiers, and not to be confounded with the "wine mingled with myrrh," spoken of by Mark (15 : 23), and offered to him, doubtless, as a friendly and sustaining beverage. But the best commentators are, however, of the opinion, that it was the same drink under different names. A cheap acid wine, mingled with bitter myrrh, was given to persons about to be executed, in order to stupefy them, and render them more insensible to pain. Our Savior tasted, but did not drink of it, and thus the evangelists harmonize in the statement of one, that "he tasted thereof but would not drink," and of the others, that "he received it not." He chose to die in the active possession of his faculties, rather than in that state of mental stupefaction which such a drink would have produced. The words *mingled with gall*, harmonize with Mark's *mingled with myrrh*, for the gall here referred to was not the secretion from the liver, but bitter herbs such as wormwood, poppy, myrrh, and

35 <sup>b</sup> And they crucified him,  
 and parted his garments, casting  
 lots : that it might be fulfilled  
 which was spoken by the prophet ;  
<sup>c</sup> They parted my garments among

<sup>b</sup> Ma. 15 : 24 ; Lu. 23 : 34 ; Jn. 19 : 24.

<sup>c</sup> Ps. 22 : 18.

the like. Matthew may have used the word gall, instead of myrrh, to conform to the exact words of the prophecy in Ps. 69 : 21.

35-38. THE CRUCIFIXION. *Jerusalem.*  
 Sixth day of the Week. Mark 15 : 24-28 ; Luke 23 : 24-33 ; John 19 : 18-24.

35. *They crucified him, &c.* They nailed him to the cross, and erected it in its upright position. Crucifixion was not only the most ignominious, but the most cruel of punishments. Cicero says that "it ought to be removed from the sight, hearing, and thought of man." Dr. Richter, a German physician, in a Dissertation on the Savior's crucifixion, says that the suffering arose from the unnatural position of the body, the arms being extended back and almost immoveable, the least motion causing an extremely painful sensation in the hands and feet, which have been pierced with nails, and which abounding in nerves and tendons, create the most exquisite anguish. The exposure of so many wounds to the air brings on inflammation, which every moment increases the poignancy of the sufferings. Into those parts of the body which are distended, more blood flows through the arteries than can be carried back through the veins. The blood vessels of the head become swollen, causing pain and redness of the face. The stomach receiving and retaining more than its ordinary quantity of blood, is peculiarly exposed to mortification. The blood of the lungs is unable to find free circulation. The consequence of this disarrangement of the blood vessels, is an internal excitement, exertion, and anxiety more intolerable than the anguish of death itself. All the large vessels about the heart, and all the veins and arteries in that part of the system, on account of the accumulation and pres-



them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

36 <sup>d</sup> And sitting down they watched him there ;

*d* Ver. 54.

sure of blood, are the source of inexpressible misery. This anguish gradually increases, but the victim is able to live under it, commonly till the third and sometimes till the seventh day. *And parted his garments.* The criminal was usually crucified naked, and his clothes were given to the soldiers, to whom were assigned the particular duties of the execution. The raiment of our Lord was divided into four parts (John 19 : 23), in order that each soldier might have a share. They decided by lot, which part each man should take. But as to his coat (see N. on 5 : 40), inasmuch as it had no seam, by which it could be divided without injury, they cast special lots, to determine to which of the four it should belong. *Casting lots.* The lots inscribed with each man's name or sign, were thrown into a helmet or hollow vessel, and that was the winning lot which first came out. *That it might be fulfilled, &c.* See N. on 1 : 22. *By the prophet.* The quotation is from Ps. 22 : 18, in which are several other very striking predictions of our Savior's sufferings and death. In this Messianic Psalm, the writer employs the first person, because he directly personates Christ. This is evident from v. 16, in which he speaks of his hands and feet being pierced, which was in no sense true of David, who composed the psalm. Wrapt in high prophetic ecstasy, his mind is carried forward to the time of the passion of the Messiah, into which he enters with such depth of sympathy, that he writes as though personally suffering the anguish of his dying Lord. No difference is to be sought in the words translated *garments* and *vesture*, the last being according to the laws of Hebrew poetry, only a varied repetition of the former, and both referring to his garments, outer and inner.

36. *And sitting down.* As the soldiers were obliged to remain some length of

37 And <sup>e</sup> set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

*e* Ma. 15 : 26 ; Lu. 23 : 38 ; Jn. 19 : 19.

time by the cross, they sat down in order to avoid the fatigue of standing. *Watched him* to prevent any attempt of his friends to take him down from the cross.

37. Although this verse follows the account of the parting of the garments and casting lots, yet it is to be regarded, as a part of the general narrative. The words *and set*, do not refer necessarily to the soldiers. Pilate seems to have written the superscription, and sent it to be affixed to the cross (see John 19 : 19) by some of his guards or attendants. It was customary to fasten upon the upright beam, a little above the head, a plate, on which was inscribed the crime laid to the criminal's charge. *This is Jesus, &c.* A most remarkable mistake or oversight, unless Pilate, who caused the inscription to be put up, in order to taunt the Jews purposely wrote it thus. Instead of writing "This is Jesus, who pretended to be king of the Jews," as the chief priests (John 19 : 21) wished it to be altered so as to read, he wrote the real and sublime truth, that Jesus who hung there in agony on the cross, was the King of the Jews, the true Messiah, the long-expected One, whose reign over them would have no bound or end. The shade of difference in the words of the inscription is very small, and results mainly from the various languages in which it was written (see Luke and John), in the interpretation of which there would naturally be slight verbal variations. But where there is so perfect an agreement in sense, such a verbal difference furnishes the highest evidence of the independence and truthfulness of the sacred writers. In regard to the three languages in which the accusation was written, the Roman was selected as the language of the masters of the world; the Greek, because it was the language of the Hellen-

38 <sup>f</sup>Then were there two thieves crucified with him; one on the right hand, and another on the left.

39 ¶ And <sup>g</sup>they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,

<sup>f</sup>Is. 53: 12; Ma. 15: 27; Lu. 23: 32, 33; Jn. 19: 18. <sup>g</sup>Ps. 22: 7, & 109: 25; Ma. 15: 29; Lu. 23: 35-

istic Jews, who came up to worship at Jerusalem; the Hebrew, as being the vernacular tongue of the place.

38. *Then were there two thieves.* In all the other Evangelists, the thieves are mentioned previously to the division of our Lord's garments among the soldiers. The proper place for this incident is between vs. 34 and 35. These thieves or robbers probably had just been condemned by Pilate, who in his visits to Jerusalem from Casarea, tried such criminals as might be brought before him. Barabbas was one of these robbers, but had been released at the instance of the people. The roads all around Jerusalem were infested with bandits, rendering travelling very insecure, unless people united in caravans or companies for mutual protection. This resulted not only from the general corruption in the morals of the nation, but also from the grinding oppression of the Romans, which drove men to desperation and crime, who would otherwise have gained their livelihood by the avails of honest industry. *One on the right hand, &c.* The central position as the more ignominious one, was given to Jesus. So much was he the object of general contempt, that the thieves even united with the multitude in reviling him. Thus, as Mark observes, was fulfilled the prediction of Isaiah (53: 12), "and he was numbered with the transgressors." It was when Jesus was raised on the cross between these two malefactors, that he uttered, according to Luke, that sublime and affecting prayer, "Father, forgive them," &c.

39-44. JESUS MOCKED UPON THE CROSS. *Jerusalem.* Sixth day of the Week. Mark 15: 29-32; Luke 23: 35-37, 39-43.

40 And saying, <sup>a</sup>Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. <sup>b</sup>If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

41 Likewise also the chief

<sup>a</sup>Ch. 26: 61; Jn. 2: 19. <sup>b</sup>Ch. 26: 63.

39, 40. *And they that passed by, on their way to and from the city.* These passers-by united with the mob in reviling Jesus. *Wagging their heads.* Here was a fulfillment of Ps. 22: 7. *Thou that destroyest, &c.* A repetition of the false charge made in his examination before the high priest (26: 61). This was the only thing in his whole ministry, which they could even pervert against him. His purity of life, and strict observance of all moral and religious duties, were such, that they sought in vain for any fault of which to accuse him. Hence this perpetual charge, which they rang upon the charge of destroying the temple, and in three days rebuilding it, which by wresting his words and on false testimony, they were enabled to make against him. *Save thyself.* They deridingly tell him, that if he could perform the amazing feat of rebuilding the temple in three days, he could assuredly save himself from the cross. *If thou be the Son of God.* Here was another ground of reproach. He had avowed himself the Messiah, which they converted into the crime of blasphemy (26: 64, 65). *Come down, &c.* This he could do only by miraculous power, to the display of which they now challenge him.

41. *Likewise also the chief priests.* They not only instigated the rabble to mock him in his helpless agony, but joined in the abuse. This debasing of themselves to a level with the common people, in witnessing the execution and mocking at his sufferings, shows how intense was their hatred to him. *Mocking him.* Mark says that "they spake among themselves with the scribes." They spake in tones loud

priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said,

42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

‡ Ps. 22 : 8.

enough to be heard by him, and thus armed their scoffs with the most pointed sting. It would be difficult to find elsewhere such refinement of malice and cruelty.

42. *He saved others*, i. e. he pretended to save others. They did not admit that he really did this. Some give the words an interrogative form, as conveying more cutting sarcasm. But the original will hardly admit of this, and it does not comport so well with the antithesis, *himself he cannot save*. The point of the irony lies in this: His efforts to save himself are of no avail, which shows that his miracles were an imposition practised upon the credulity of the people. His miraculous powers have deserted him, just at the time when he most needed them. There can be no doubt now that he is a vile impostor. *If he be the King of Israel*, &c. The same vein of sarcasm is pursued, but in somewhat varied form. If he who claimed to be the Messiah, would descend from the cross by his own unaided power, they profess their willingness to be his disciples. What malignity and blindness was manifested by them in this hour of their triumph. According to Luke, the soldiers took up this last remark, and echoed it insultingly in his ears.

43. *He trusted in God*. The use of the third person here and in the preceding verse, shows that these remarks were made to one another in his hearing. With wagging heads and fingers, pointed at him in derision, they exclaim: He pretends to have trusted in God. He has even boasted of being his Son. *Let (his) God deliver him now if he will have him* (i. e. if he takes pleasure in him). In their eagerness to

43 <sup>k</sup> He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

44 <sup>l</sup> The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

‡ Ma. 15 : 32; Lu. 23 : 39.

heap insults and reproaches upon him, they forgot that they were employing the very language, which in Ps. 22 : 8, the murderers of the Messiah are represented as using. Thus wicked men often fulfill the purposes of God, and verify the divine predictions, while giving vent to their spite and endeavoring to obstruct his plans. *For he said*, &c. See 26 : 64. They may have heard also from Judas, that Jesus professed to his disciples to be the Son of God. See 16 : 16-20.

44. *The thieves also*, &c. As one of these malefactors became penitent, and obtained forgiveness of his sins (Luke 23: 39-43), while he hung on the cross, it is supposed by some expositors, that Matthew and Mark use the plural for the singular, and that the penitent thief did not at all unite with his companion in casting contempt upon Jesus. The instances adduced, however, to corroborate this use of the plural for the singular, are generally such, as when one speaks in the name of the rest, what is thus said is attributed to all, as in Mark 7 : 17, compared with Matt. 15 : 15; Mark 5 : 31, compared with Luke 8 : 45; and Luke 9 : 13, compared with John 6 : 8, 9. It seems better, therefore, to suppose that at first, he joined his more hardened associate in deriding Jesus, but that afterwards, being struck by his meek and heavenly deportment, and calling to mind his own wicked life, through the quickening influence of the Holy Spirit, he became penitent and believing. The other malefactor, however, went so far beyond him in scoffing at Jesus, that Luke speaks of him as alone having done this; and of the other as reproving him, which he doubtless did, as soon as he was

45 <sup>m</sup> Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

*m* Am. 8 : 9 ; Ma. 15 : 33 ; Lu. 23 : 44.

brought by divine grace to see his own lost condition. This attributing to one what was done by two is quite common. See 8 : 28, compared with Luke 8 : 27 ; and 20 : 30, compared with Mark 10 : 46 ; Luke 18 : 35. *Cast the same ; literally, reproached him in the same manner.* It was about the time when the penitent thief obtained forgiveness, that our Lord committed his mother to the care of the beloved disciple, as related in John 19 : 25-27.

45-50. THE SUPERNATURAL DARKNESS. JESUS EXPIRES ON THE CROSS. *Jerusalem.* Sixth day of the Week. Mark 15 : 33-37 ; Luke 23 : 44-46.

45. *Now from the sixth hour, i. e.* from 12 o'clock, M. as we reckon time. Our Lord had now been three hours on the cross. See Mark 15 : 25. *There was darkness, &c.* This could not have been a solar eclipse, inasmuch as it was in the time of the full moon. Nor did it arise, as some think, from the murky atmosphere, which precedes an earthquake. There was indeed this convulsion of nature also (see v. 51), but the haze, which is sometimes the precursor of an earthquake, cannot be all that is here meant. The darkness was, no doubt, preternatural. It may have resulted from dark vapory clouds, for God can press into his service any or all the agencies of nature. But darkness of so long duration at mid-day, with the exception of that brought upon Egypt (Ex. 10 : 21-23), we have no reason to believe ever took place at any other time. It is evident, however, that it was not total, although such as to obscure the sun (Luke 23 : 45). As it respects its extent, the early commentators supposed that it covered the whole earth. It is better with modern expositors to refer it only to Jerusalem and its vicinity, or at farthest to the land of Judea. *Until the ninth hour, i. e.* until 3 o'clock, P.M.

46. *About the ninth hour, &c.* As

46 And about the ninth hour <sup>n</sup> Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachtha-*

*n* He. 5 : 7.

Jesus had hung six hours on the cross, his strength was now yielding to his physical and mental sufferings. The cry which he uttered, shows that he was laboring under great mental darkness and anguish, and this, with the agonies of the cross, brought on speedy dissolution. *With a loud voice.* It was a cry of the deepest agony. The sufferer could no longer repress his anguish. He had borne in silence the cruel scourging, the lacerating crown of thorns, the overpowering weight of the cross, as weak and bleeding he bore it along towards Calvary. No cry escaped him when the spikes were driven through his hands and feet, and he was raised upon the accursed tree. For six long hours he was suspended, his body racked with intense pain, yet he uttered no complaint. But now in the depth of distress, he cries, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?* It cannot be doubted, when all these things are taken into consideration, that it was his mental, rather than his physical anguish, which extorted from him this cry. It was, doubtless, a recurrence with even greater force, of the agony which he endured in the garden. He was now overwhelmed with distress. He had entered upon his great and last conflict with the powers of darkness. The cup of God's wrath against sin, he was now draining to the very dregs. He was treading the wine press alone, and none to help or uphold (Isa. 63 : 3, 5). In his great distress he utters these touching words, not in a spirit of complaint or impatience, but because so broken down in body and spirit, that he seemed to be deserted even of his Heavenly Father. But God had not forsaken him, for he was doing the very work, which it pleased his Father to lay upon him. It must not be forgotten, however, that Jesus had a human nature, as susceptible of suffering as ours ; that it was now



ni? that is to say, ° My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said, This *man* calleth for Elias.

o Ps. 22 : 1.

sinking beneath an intolerable load of anguish, while his body in the last agonies of death, rendered him less able to endure the mysterious and awful burden, imposed upon him as the Savior of mankind. The words he uttered were taken from Ps. 22 : 1, of which *Eli, Eli, lama* are Hebrew, and *sabach-thani* is the Aramæan or Syro-Chaldaic, which was the language then in common use. In Mark it is written, *Eloi, Eloi*, which is the Aramæan form for *Eli*. *That is to say*, i. e. which being interpreted. These are the words of the Evangelist, who wrote his gospel in Greek, but retained the words as spoken by Jesus, in order to show why the Jews represented him as calling upon Elias. Those who contend that Matthew's gospel was first written in Hebrew or the Aramaic, make the words *that is to say*, those of the translator. *Hast forsaken*. This is a word of highly intensive signification. It literally means *to leave behind* in a state of trial or distress, *to forsake* or *abandon utterly*. To the mind of Jesus, there seemed to be a total abandonment of him by his Father, and hence his cry of anguish, at being thus left alone to struggle with the malice of hell and of wicked men.

47. *Some of them, &c.* As the Roman soldiers knew nothing of Elias, this must refer to the Jews, who stood by, and either misunderstood Jesus, or intentionally perverted his words. The latter supposition is the more probable. It presented a new mode of deriding his Messianic claims, to represent him as calling upon his forerunner, as though Elias or any of the prophets could help him in this extremity. *This man*. See N. on 26 : 61.

48. *One of them ran, &c.* This was done in consequence of the words,

48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled *it* with vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink.

49 The rest said, Let be, let

p Ps. 69 : 21 ; Ma. 15 : 36 ; Lu. 23 : 36 ;  
Jn. 19 : 29.

"I thirst," recorded by John 19 : 28. Extreme thirst attended the agonies of the cross, especially the dying struggle. *A sponge*. This being porous absorbed the liquid, and on being conveyed to the mouth of Jesus, he was enabled to slightly quench his thirst. There was no other way in which drink could well be conveyed to him, in his present condition. *Vinegar*. This was a kind of cheap, acid wine, mingled with water, a common drink of the Roman soldiers, and of the poorer classes. Dr. Jahn says, that it was an artificial drink, made from pure wine, and a species of strong drink called *sikera*, which was used by the common people at their ordinary repasts. John says that there was a vessel of this liquor set near by, probably for the use of the soldiers, who watched the crucifixion. This incident is not to be confounded with the offering of vinegar related by Luke (23 : 37), which was a previous act, and done in mockery. *Put it on a reed*. This was a stalk or stem of hyssop (see John 19 : 29). Our Savior hung so low, that a branch or stalk of this shrub would be of sufficient length to bring the sponge to his mouth, in case that the person who offered it, elevated it with the full reach of his arm.

49. *The rest said, Let be*. The expression is not *let him alone*, as is usually supposed, but it is like our hortatory *come or wait now*. That it was not intended as a rebuke to the one who was presenting the vinegar, is evident from Mark, where that person himself is said to have uttered the word in common with the rest. *Let us see, &c.* Jesus was evidently drawing near his end. His head, unsupported by the kind and gentle hand of sympathizing friends, was reclining in weakness. But this only added to the exultation

us see whether Elias will come to save him.

50 ¶ <sup>9</sup> Jesus, when he had

*q* Ma. 15 : 37 ; Lu. 23 : 46.

of his enemies. They derisively exhort one another to wait, and see whether Elias will appear to take him down from the cross. They seem not at all to have been affected at the preternatural darkness, or if they had felt a momentary alarm, when the sun was first veiled from their sight, their implacable desire for revenge, and joy at the prospect of being rid of the man, who had so fully and fearlessly exposed their hypocrisy to the people, got the better of their fears, and rendered them insensible to the strange and fearful darkness, which for three hours had now hung over them.

50. *When he had cried again, &c.* This was his expiring cry. With a calm confidence in his God, he said, "It is finished (John 19 : 30), and having commended his spirit into the hands of his Father (Luke 23 : 46), he *yielded up the ghost* (i. e. he expired). His work was now done, his agony was over. No more was he to be put to shame and torture by wicked men. He was now to enter upon the joy set before him (Heb. 12 : 2), and to reassume those glories of which he had disrobed himself (Philip. 2 : 7, 8), when he took our nature to suffer and die for the sin of the world.

51-56. THE VAIL OF THE TEMPLE IS RENT, AND GRAVES OPENED. *Jerusalem.* Sixth day of the Week. Mark 15 : 38-41 ; Luke 23 : 45, 47-49.

51. *The veil of the temple.* The veil of the inner sanctuary, or that which separated the *holy of holies* from the outer sanctuary. Within this veil it was lawful for the high priest only to enter, and that once a year, to make expiation for the sins of the people (Heb. 9 : 7). But Christ being the high priest of good things to come, by his own blood having entered in once to the holy place, into a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, and having obtained thereby

cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

51 And, behold, the veil of the

*r* Ex. 26 : 31 ; 2 Ch. 3 : 14 ; Ma. 15 : 38 ;  
Lu. 23 : 45.

eternal redemption for us, this veil was rent in order to show, that the typical service of the high priest was now at an end, and that the way into the holiest of all, by the blood of Jesus, was open to all. See Heb. 9 : 11, 12 : 10 : 19, 20. There were two veils of the temple, one of great dimensions at the entrance, which opened into the sanctuary, being 55 cubits in height, and 16 in breadth. This, according to Josephus, "was a Babylonian curtain, embroidered with blue and fine linen, and scarlet, and purple, and of a texture truly wonderful." The veil which separated the most holy place from this outer sanctuary, was also heavy, thick, and richly embroidered. *From the top to the bottom.* This curtain was probably of the same height as the outer one (i. e. 55 cubits). Through its whole length it was rent asunder. No human hands could have done this, and not have been detected, since it took place at a time, when one of the chief priests (perhaps Caiaphas himself) was burning incense before it. Nor could it have been rent by an earthquake, as some who would explain away every thing supernatural, endeavor to maintain. This curtain hung in such loose folds, and was so thick and fine with its close embroidery, that no earthquake could have torn it asunder, even though violent enough to have shaken to the ground every building in Jerusalem. This rending of the veil is also spoken of, as a distinct thing from the earthquake. *And the earth did quake.* Earthquakes were common in Palestine, and yet it cannot but be regarded as preternatural, that one should happen just at the time of our Lord's death, attended with the rending of the great veil of the temple, the cleaving asunder of rocks, and the opening of graves. Such a combination of strange convulsions of nature, is in itself so unusual, that were not the

temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

52 And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose,

53 And came out of the graves

individual circumstances preternatural, the whole scene would strike every candid mind, as a divine attestation of displeasure, at the tragical event which had just closed. It would require a much greater stretch of credulity, to believe that these things happened in the ordinary course of events, than to refer them to the direct agency of God. *The rocks rent*; literally, *were rent*. Immense fissures are still shown, as the effect of this great earthquake.

52, 53. *The graves were opened*. These graves or sepulchres were the natural or artificial excavations in rocks. The entrance was closed either by a stone door, or a flat stone placed against the mouth of it. Ps. 5: 9; John 11: 38; Matt. 28: 2; Mark 16: 3, 4. These stone doors and slabs were so removed from their position, that the entrance to the sepulchres lay open. *And many bodies, &c.* It appears from this passage, that these saints had not been long dead, for on their reappearance in the city, they were known to many. They were, doubtless, saints of eminent piety, like Simeon, and Anna, and Zachariah, and of such public note, as to be known to many by whom they were seen. *Which slept*. Death is often represented in the Scriptures, as a peaceful, gentle sleep. Especially is this metaphor appropriate to those who sleep in Jesus. *Arose and came out, &c.* These words are to be taken with the clause, *after his resurrection*, as is clear from the grammatical construction, and also from 1 Cor. 15: 20, where Christ is declared to be "the first fruits of them that slept." The graves were opened at the time of the earthquake, but no divine quickening influence was exerted upon the bodies, until after

after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

54 \* Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were

s Ver. 36; Ma. 15: 39; Lu. 23: 47.

Christ's resurrection. They were raised to show that the power of the grave was destroyed by Christ, and that his resurrection was the earnest or pledge of that of all his people. These saints are supposed to have ascended to heaven, when Christ was received up (Acts 1: 9). *And came out*; literally, *and having come out*. Thus the words *arose* and *went* are directly connected, and the time of the former must be the same as that of the latter, which was after his resurrection. There is no ground whatever to suppose with some commentators, that these saints were restored to life at the time of the earthquake, but remained in their tombs until after Christ's resurrection. *The holy city*, i. e. Jerusalem, the epithet *holy* being given it, because it was the religious as well as political capital of the nation. The tombs and sepulchres were outside of the city, and therefore these risen saints are said to have come into it. It is strange that any should be in doubt, as to whether these bodies were received up into heaven, or returned again to the grave, there to sleep until the general resurrection. Had the latter been true, the Jewish priests could have disputed, with some show of reason, the reality of their appearance, finding their bodies, as they would have done, yet in the grave. This leads us to believe (for revelation is silent on this point), that they were taken up with our Lord into glory.

54. *The centurion* who presided over the execution. *They that were with him*, i. e. the soldiers who kept guard on the occasion. *Saw the earthquake and those things, &c.* By the latter clause is meant the attendant circumstances, as

done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

55 And many women were there beholding afar off, 'which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him :

56 " Among which was Mary

† Lu. 8 : 2, 3.    u Ma. 15 : 40.

the preternatural darkness, the rending of the rocks, and the concurrence of these great convulsions of nature, with the expiring cry of Jesus (Mark 15 : 39). *They feared greatly.* The expression in the original is very emphatic. They were filled with terror, at such awful appearances attending the death of one, whose claim to be the Son of God, they had learned from the taunts of the priests and people. In connection with this, see Luke 23 : 48, 49. *Truly this was, &c.* They were now convinced that Jesus was no impostor. Mark and Luke represent the centurion alone as speaking. But the soldiers may have caught up the words of the centurion and repeated them, so that Matthew's account does not conflict with that of the other Evangelists. It is not probable that the centurion had very clear or definite views of the phrase, *Son of God*. He used the words, because the priests had said that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God (see vs. 40, 43). But being a heathen he doubtless regarded Jesus as some inferior deity descended to earth (see Acts 14 : 11), or allied in some way to the gods, or at least in great favor with them. It is to be hoped that he was led to the knowledge of the truth, and to the spiritual import of that confession, which the awful circumstances of the crucifixion drew from him. That such was the case seems probable from Luke 23 : 47.

55. *And many women, &c.* The near relations and friends of Jesus. See John 19 : 25-27. *Beholding afar off.* They had now retired at a distance from the scene of suffering and death. Perhaps they had been ordered away by the soldiers, who guarded the cross ;

Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

57 " When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple :

æ Ma. 15 : 42 ; Lu. 23 : 50 ; Jn. 19 : 38.

or finding themselves debarred from rendering him any act of sympathy, had retired of their own accord to some place, where they could see him, and at the same time give free utterance to their grief. *Which followed, &c.* They had previously in Galilee ministered to his wants with their substance (Mark 15 : 41 ; Luke 8 : 3), and had followed him to Jerusalem, to perform the same kind services. The courage and devotion of these women are here recorded, while of the disciples who forsook him and fled (26 : 56), no one save John is mentioned as attending the crucifixion or being near the scene. "Never did female constancy shine more brightly, and never was a happier example set for all who should afterwards believe in him." Barnes.

56. *Mary Magdalene* (i. e. from Magdala. See 15 : 39), so called to distinguish her from the other Marys. She was remarkable for her attachment to Jesus, who had dispossessed her of seven devils (Luke 8 : 2). *Mary the mother, &c.* She was the sister of Jesus' mother (see N. on 10 : 3). *James the Less.* Mark 15 : 40. *The mother of Zebedee's children.* See 20 : 20. Mark says that besides these, there were many other women present, who came up with him unto Jerusalem.

57-61. THE BODY OF JESUS TAKEN FROM THE CROSS AND BURIED. *Jerusalem.* Sixth day of the Week. Mark 15 : 42-47 ; Luke 23 : 50-56 ; John 19 : 38-42.

57. *When the even was come.* This was the first evening. See N. on 14 : 15. It was about 3 o'clock, P. M. when our Savior expired. As it was a day of preparation for the Sabbath, which, falling at this time upon the second day



58 He went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

60 And <sup>y</sup> laid it in his own new

*y* Is. 53 : 9.

of the paschal festival, became a high or great day (John 19 : 31), the Jews were anxious that the crucifixion might be brought to a speedy close, and besought Pilate that, according to custom, the death of the malefactors might be hastened by the breaking of their limbs. When the soldiers came to Jesus and found him dead already, one of them wantonly and inhumanly pierced his side with a spear, from which wound flowed blood and water, showing that his heart had been reached, and that this wound would have been mortal, had he merely fainted on the cross, instead of being really dead. *There came a rich man.* His wealth is spoken of, inasmuch as a prophecy (Isa. 53 : 9) was thereby fulfilled. Had it not been for this interposition of Joseph, his body would have been cast into a hole, dug in some vile place, with the malefactors, crucified with him, and thus his grave would have been with the wicked ones. But while it was thus appointed by his enemies, divine providence so arranged it, that he was "with the rich (i. e. in the rich man's sepulchre) in his death," and thus both parts of the prophecy were fulfilled. *Of Arimathea.* This is thought by some to be the Ramah of Samuel, although its site cannot be satisfactorily determined. It was doubtless some city of Benjamin (Luke 23 : 51), near to Jerusalem. *Named Joseph.* According to Mark and Luke, he was a counsellor or member of the Sanhedrim. He was a disciple of Jesus, though secretly through fear of the Jews (John 19 : 38), and is commended by Mark and Luke in high terms. His natural timidity seems to have been overcome by the prodigies attending Jesus' death, and he therefore went in *boldly* (Mark 15 : 43) unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. He had need of haste, for at 6 o'clock the Jewish sabbath began, and it would

then have been unlawful to bury the corpse. As Jesus had been executed as a public malefactor, no one, unless he had special permission from the governor, could lawfully take his body down from the cross for burial.

58. *Then Pilate, &c.* Mark says that the governor wondered greatly at his being already dead, and made special inquiry as to the truth of it. Having ascertained the fact, he readily gave the body to Joseph, as he had requested.

59. *And taken the body of Jesus* down from the cross. They did not lower the cross itself to do this, but drew out the spikes from the hands and feet, and took the body down, leaving the cross in its upright position. It appears from John 19 : 39, that Nicodemus joined in these kindly offices of Joseph to the dead, and brought for anointing the body a mixture of aloes of about an hundred pounds' weight. It is remarkable that these men, who had both previously shrunk from having it publicly known, that they were attached to the cause of Jesus (see John 3 : 2 ; 19 : 38), should have manifested such boldness, at a time when all the disciples except John had fled in terror from the scene of suffering and death. *A clean linen cloth.* This *sindon* (so called in the Greek from *Sind* or *Indus*, where it was first fabricated) was of fine linen or muslin, and used among other things for wrapping up the bodies which were embalmed. Upon this fine linen sheet they laid the body of Jesus, and then wound it in as many folds, as they deemed necessary, the first fold being so covered with the myrrh and aloes, as to bring the spices in contact with every part of the body.

60. *In his own new tomb.* How providential were all these circumstances. Had the body been deposited in some tomb previously used as a recep-

tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

of the dead, the Jews might have parried the great argument of the truth of Christianity, drawn from Christ's resurrection, by attributing the resuscitation of his body to some prophet's bones, as in 2 Kings 13 : 21; or they might have said, that some other body than that of Jesus had arisen. But it was a tomb hewn out of the living rock, in which never man before was laid (Luke 23 : 53; John 19 : 41), and every cavity of this sort was therefore set aside. In respect to the construction of tombs and sepulchres, see N. on 8 : 28. We are told by John, who on this point is somewhat more circumstantial than the other Evangelists, that this tomb was in a garden near to the place where Jesus was crucified. This rendered it a convenient place for depositing temporarily, at least, the body of Jesus. *In the rock.* The presence of the article in the original shows the rockiness of the place, on which we have the testimony of Josephus, as well as of modern travellers. This tomb was not dug downwards, but cut horizontally into the rock, as is evident from the words, *rolled a great stone to the door*, &c. This latter act was done to guard the entrance against beasts, or such persons as might be disposed to profane the sepulchre. This incidental and, in a human point of view, *accidental* circumstance, became an important one in Christ's resurrection, for as the tomb had been hewn from a solid rock, and its mouth closed by a huge stone under charge of a Roman guard, it was impossible for the body to have been removed, without the knowledge of the soldiers. This stone was probably flat, or nearly so, the word *rolled* being used in the sense of working a large stone along, by lifting up one end and letting it fall over, so that each time it is passed onward its own length. That this tomb was not intended as the final resting-place of the body of Jesus, is

61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

62 ¶ Now the next day, that

evident from Mark 15 : 42, where is given as a reason for laying it in Joseph's tomb, the near approach of the Jewish sabbath, and because this sepulchre was near at hand.

61. *Mary Magdalene.* See N. on v. 56. *The other Mary*, i. e. the mother of James and Joses. *Sitting over against* (i. e. opposite to). Their position enabled them to see both what was done to the body, and where it was laid. It appears from Luke (23 : 56) that after his burial, they returned to the city, and spent the short time which remained previous to the sabbath, in preparing spices and ointments, in order, as soon as the sabbath was past, to embalm his body more carefully than Joseph and Nicodemus had time to do.

62-66. THE WATCH AT THE SEPULCHRE. *Jerusalem.* Seventh day of the Week, or Jewish Sabbath.

62. *Now the next day.* The Jewish sabbath began at sunset, and therefore the expression *next day*, in their division of time, was applicable to the hours which began at the setting sun. It is thus that the evening of the day of his crucifixion, at which time they came to Pilate with this request to make sure the sepulchre, is called the *next day*. Such designations of time can only be understood, by a reference to the Hebrew division of the day. It is singular that Alford should regard this as taking place, not on the evening following the crucifixion, but on the one *after the termination of the sabbath*, which, in reference to the avowed purpose for which the guard was demanded, would be absurd. *The day of preparation.* The hours immediately preceding the sabbath being employed in making preparation for its observance, by preparing food, fuel, and other necessary things, it was called the *eve of preparation*, or *preparation-eve*. It commenced about the ninth hour (i. e. 3 o'clock, P. M.), as is evident from

followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, <sup>a</sup>After three days I will rise again.

64 Command therefore that the

<sup>a</sup> Ch. 16 : 21, & 17 : 23, & 20 : 19, & 26 : 61 ;  
Ma. 8 : 31, & 10 : 34 ; Lu. 9 : 22, & 18 : 33, & 24 :  
6, 7 ; Jn. 2 : 19.

Joseph. Ant. XVI. 6 § 2, where the Emperor Augustus directed, that they should not be held to give pledges on the sabbath, nor during the preparation for the same *after the ninth hour*. The epithet *preparation*, as was natural, came to be applied to the whole day before the Jewish sabbath, and thus it is used in the present instance. *The chief priests*, &c. They had effected the death of Jesus, but their minds were not yet free from anxiety. They had reason to fear that this was not the end of the affair. All they could now do, however, was to make the sepulchre as sure as possible, but this could hardly have relieved their disquietude, when they call to mind his solemn and oft-repeated declaration, that he should suffer death, and rise again on the third day. Some think their object was to prevent the body of Jesus from being embalmed, and fearing that they could obtain no decree to prevent this from Pilate, they had recourse to this artifice, well knowing that the body could not be reached by his friends, without their breaking the seal, which they would not dare to do. But this is too low a motive, when a greater and more urgent one offers itself, in the fears of his resurrection. *Came together unto Pilate* ; literally, *went to and assembled at* (the house of) *Pilate*. They were gathered together in a body. This shows the depth of concern which agitated their mind.

63. *We remember*, &c. They had probably heard this from others, as it is quite evident that his predicted resurrection was publicly known. The meaning of our Lord's saying, "in

sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead : so the last error shall be worse than the first.

65 Pilate said unto them, Ye

three days I will rise again," as Alford remarks, was hid from the disciples, but the fact of its having been said could be no secret. *That deceiver* ; literally, *vagabond, impostor*. The word was one of great reproach. They had before charged him with deceiving the people (John 7 : 12). Notwithstanding the repeated declaration of Pilate that no fault was to be found in Jesus, they repeat their vile slander, impudently ignoring Pilate's attestation to his innocence. *After* (more literally *within*) *three days*, &c. This was a remarkable acknowledgment on their part, that Jesus had predicted his own resurrection after three days. This they could not afterwards deny, howsoever much they might have been inclined to do.

64. *Be made sure* with guards, seals, &c. *Until the third day*. This is a commentary on the expression, "within three days," showing that the third day is meant, and not three full days of 24 hours each. *Lest*, i. e. lest perhaps. The word in this connection, refers to what is probable or likely to happen. *Steal him away*, i. e. remove his body by stealth from the tomb. The word in the original refers to any act done stealthfully, but almost always in a bad sense. *He is risen from the dead*, according to his declaration. *So the last error*, &c. They insinuate by this proverbial expression, that sedition and rebellion against the Romans would be more likely to ensue from such a rumor, than though Jesus had been suffered to practise his deceiving arts unpunished. In this way they practise upon the fears of the Roman governor, and obtain their request.

have a watch : go your way, make *it* as sure as ye can.

66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, <sup>a</sup>sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

<sup>a</sup> Da. 6 : 17.

65. *Ye have a watch.* Some render this as an imperative. The sense is the same, *ye have a guard* (at your service), being equivalent to *have ye or take ye a guard*. The absence of the article in the original, forbids our referring this to the guard who kept watch at the crucifixion. Alford thinks that it may have been some detachment, placed under the disposal of the Sanhedrim during the feast, and this seems to find support in the fact, that they made their report to the chief priests, and not to Pilate. But it is least objectionable, to consider the guard as furnished for the occasion, the words, *ye have a guard*, showing the readiness of Pilate to grant their request. *Make it* (i. e. the sepulchre) *as sure as ye can*; literally, *as ye know how*. The affability of Pilate toward these wicked men, whom he knew to have conspired to effect the death of an innocent person, shows that whatever compunction he may have felt in pronouncing sentence of death upon Jesus, had all passed away, or was for the time displaced by the desire to conciliate these leading men of the nation, whom he had reason to fear he had exasperated, in giving up Jesus with such evident reluctance to death.

65. *Sealing the stone.* This denotes the way in which they made the sepulchre sure. A cord was probably brought around the stone, the two ends of which were joined with the sealing material, to which was affixed a seal, doubtless that of Pilate. The stone could not be removed, therefore, without cutting the cord or breaking the seal. This was the usual way, in which letters and books were sealed in ancient times. *Setting a watch*; literally, *with a watch*, i. e. they sealed the stone, at the same time that they set the guard.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN the <sup>a</sup>end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary

<sup>a</sup> Ma. 16 : 1 ; Lu. 24 : 1 ; Jn. 20 : 1.

## CHAP. XXVIII.

1-7. INCIDENTS ATTENDING CHRIST'S RESURRECTION. *Jerusalem.* First day of the Week, or the Christian Sabbath. Mark 16 : 1-7 ; Luke 24 : 1-8 ; John 20 : 1, 2.

1. *In the end of the sabbath*; literally, *sabbaths*, plural for singular. The Jewish sabbath had closed on the evening of the preceding day, and hence these words of Matthew are equivalent to the parallel passage in Mark, "and when the sabbath was past." *As it began to dawn*, i. e. at the early dawn or morning twilight, when the eye can begin to discern surrounding objects. *Towards the first day of the week* (literally, *first day of the sabbaths*, where this word is put for the interval between the sabbaths, viz. *the week*), i. e. introducing the morning of the first day. This day has since been observed as the Christian sabbath, in commemoration of the event of Christ's resurrection. The Jewish sabbath was the day preceding, that is on our Saturday. *Mary Magdalene.* See N. on 27 : 61. *To see the sepulchre.* It appears from the other evangelists, that in company with other women, they came to anoint the body with the spices and ointments, which they had prepared previous to the sabbath (Luke 23 : 56), and also in part, after the sabbath was ended (Mark 16 : 1). The removal of the great stone from the entrance to the sepulchre, was an object of great solicitude, and they inquired among themselves, who should do this for them. It is evident that they were ignorant that a guard had been set, and the stone sealed, which had been done on the day of the crucifixion, after they had returned to the city to prepare ointments for embalming his body. Meanwhile, as they drew nigh the sepulchre, they perceived that the



Magdalene <sup>b</sup> and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

2 And behold, there was a great earthquake : for 'the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

<sup>b</sup> Ch. 27 : 56.    <sup>c</sup> See Ma. 16 : 5 ; Lu. 24 : 4 ;  
Jn. 20 : 12.

stone was already rolled away. This introduces the account given by Matthew of the circumstances of its removal.

2. *There was a great earthquake.* Unless this verse is read before v. 1, it should be, *there had been a great earthquake*, as it took place before the visit of the women, and at the time of our Lord's resurrection. *For the angel of the Lord, &c.* It was not the earthquake, which effected the removal of the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre. That was done by the direct agency of the angel. The earthquake added to the solemnity and grandeur of the transaction, and served to arouse the attention of the guard, so that they all saw the glorious appearance of the angel.

3. *His countenance.* A better translation would be, *his appearance or general aspect.* This was *like lightning*, i. e. bright and dazzling as the lightning. *His raiment, &c.* This heavenly messenger was clad in robes of purity and splendor. Compare the appearance of our Lord's raiment at the transfiguration. Grotius remarks, that whiteness has ever been a symbol of purity and sanctity. See Dan. 7 : 9 ; Rev. 3 : 4 ; 6 : 11 ; 7 : 9, 13.

4. *For fear of him.* The guard not only felt the shock of the earthquake, but saw distinctly the angel, although at his preternatural splendor, they fainted and *became as dead men*, i. e. they fell to the ground as helpless as though they were really dead. It was probably while they lay in this condition, that our Lord came forth from the tomb. They were not, therefore,

3 <sup>d</sup> His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow :

4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not

<sup>d</sup> Da. 10 : 6.

eyewitnesses of his resurrection, that honor being reserved for his beloved disciples, but only of the awful events which preceded it.

5. *And the angel, &c.* This is to be connected in thought with v. 1. Upon the arrival of these women at the sepulchre, they were amazed to find the stone removed, and they entered in to see the body of their crucified Lord. It was then, according to Mark (16 : 5), that they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clad in a long white garment, at whose appearance they were affrighted. Matthew passes over this incident, and leaves his reader to presuppose the appearance of the angel, by stating what he said to the women. It appears from John (20 : 1, 2), that when the women found the tomb empty, Mary Magdalene, supposing that the body had been stolen, left her companions there, and ran into the city to tell Peter and John of what had happened. This must be borne in mind, in order to understand, how it was that Mary was alone, when our Lord appeared unto her as recorded by John (20 : 11). She had returned with Peter and John, but being unable to keep pace with them, did not reach the sepulchre until they had left it (John 20 : 10). She was therefore alone, when she saw, first the vision of angels, and afterwards Jesus himself (John 20 : 11-18). It does not militate against this view, that in Luke (24 : 10) Mary Magdalene is mentioned with the other women, who told the news of Christ's resurrection to the apostles. She did tell of this event, but not at the same time with them. They all were mes-

ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

6 He is not here: for he is

sengers sent, though at different times, from the sepulchre, and in Luke, are grouped together for the sake of unity and brevity.

In respect to the appearance of the angel to these women, skeptics have endeavored to find a discrepancy between the evangelists, as Luke speaks of two angels, and represents them as standing, while Matthew and Mark speak of only one, who, according to the latter evangelist, was sitting. But to those who will turn to Notes on 8: 20, and 20: 30, and understand the principle, on which the alleged discrepancy between Matthew and the other evangelists is there harmonized, there will be presented no difficulty in the passage before us. Matthew and Mark speak of the one who acted as spokesman, not denying, however, that there were two; but Luke, not making that distinction between the one who spoke, and the one who kept silence, represents two as being present, and speaking. As to their position, the word in Luke translated *stood*, has reference to a *sudden appearance*, or *being suddenly present*, and not at all to the posture or position of the one, who makes his appearance. See Luke 2: 9, Acts. 12: 7. There is, therefore, no real discrepancy in these statements.

*Fear not ye.* Mark (14: 5) says that the women were affrighted at the appearance of the angel. See also Luke 24: 5. *For I know*, &c. They had come on an errand of love, and not as the wicked priests and scribes would have visited the sepulchre, to insult the remains of him whom they had murdered. They had no reason, therefore, to fear the attendant angels of our Lord. The pronoun *ye* in this verse, as opposed to the enemies of Jesus, is therefore emphatic.

6. *He is not here* in the sepulchre. *He is risen*, as he said. Notwithstanding our Lord's positive assertion, that

risen, 'as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

7 And go quickly, and tell his

*e Ch. 12: 40, & 16: 21, & 17: 23, & 20: 19.*

he should rise on the third day after he had been put to death by his enemies, its true import seems strangely to have been misunderstood, if not wholly lost sight of, by his disciples and followers. That they had no expectation of such an event, is evinced in their preparations to embalm his body, and their surprise at the intelligence that he had arisen. See also John 20: 9. *Come see the place*, &c. The angel condescended to confirm their belief in this strange announcement, by showing them the empty cell or niche, in which had been placed the corpse. The disciples also, to whom they were directed to communicate the fact of his resurrection, would more readily believe them, if they declared it on the evidence of their own senses. *The Lord.* Prof. Stuart says that Matthew and Mark do not apply the title *Lord*, in its absolute sense as *supreme Ruler* or *Lord*, except after the resurrection, but Luke, John, and Paul apply it to him every where, and often.

7. *Go quickly.* They were not to keep the joyous event to themselves, or consume any time in pondering upon its amazing reality. They were directed to go with all haste, and inform the disciples of what they had seen and heard. *Tell his disciples* [and Peter. See Mark 16: 7, and also N. on 27: 75]. We are not told how the disciples spent the Jewish sabbath. As soon as they were relieved from the fear of personal danger which had caused their dispersion (26: 56) it is quite likely, however, that they came together, not to rejoice, but to weep over the apparent extinction of their hopes (see Mark 16: 10), by the crucifixion of their Master. Peter probably soon joined them, but our ignorance of the time when he experienced the pardoning love of his Lord whom he had denied, does not enable us to surmise even, whether he came to his fellow disciples with words

disciples, that he is risen from the dead; and behold, *he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.*

*f* Ch. 26 : 32; Ma. 16 : 7.

of sorrow or of hope. John was doubtless with them, his love for his departed Lord stronger than ever, by his confiding trust of his mother to his care. The women whose names are here mentioned, and others who had followed Jesus from Galilee, were not absent from this circle of disciples and friends of him whom they loved. If then, as is most likely, they had assembled in some retired house to mingle their sympathies, we may regard it as almost certain, that their time was spent in acts of devotion and tears of grief, that they had no longer the presence of their beloved Lord. *He goeth before you.* This does not mean, as in 21; 9, *to go in front or lead the way*, but *to go first, or precede in time.* When they reached the appointed place in Galilee, they were to find Jesus already there. On the allusion, which some find here to a shepherd's leading his flock, see N. on 26 : 32. *There shall ye see him.* The angel spake according to his instructions, but Jesus in his compassionate love condescended to show himself, on that very day, to these women (v. 9), to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16 : 9; John 20 : 14); to Peter (1 Cor. 15 : 5); to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus (Luke 24 : 13-35; Mark 16 : 12); and to the Eleven (Mark 16 : 14). But in Galilee, he showed himself to above 500 brethren at once (28 : 16, 17; 1 Cor. 15 : 6), and this was the promise of his appearance, referred to by the angel. *Lo, I have told you.* A confirmatory assertion of the truth of this wonderful message, which they were to carry to the disciples.

8-10. JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN ON THEIR RETURN TO THE CITY. *Jerusalem.* First day of the Week. Mark 16 : 8.

8. *From* (i. e. out of) *the sepulchre.* This accords with the account of Mark

8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

9 ¶ And as they went to tell

and Luke, both of whom speak of their having entered *into* the sepulchre. *With fear* at the glorious vision of the angels, and the manifest presence and power of God. Mark (16 : 8) says, "they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid." *Great joy* at the news of their Lord's resurrection, which they were to carry to the disciples.

9. *As they went.* While they were running with breathless haste. *Jesus met them* probably before they reached the city. A question here arises, whether this was the first or second appearance of our Savior, after his resurrection. Many think it was the latter, and that his first appearance was to Mary Magdalene, as related by Mark 16 : 9, and John 20 : 14. But a recurrence to her visit to the sepulchre, will show that it was not so. As has been remarked (N. on v. 5), she left the other women at the sepulchre, and went to inform Peter and John of the supposed violation of the tomb of Jesus. It is evident from her words to them (John 20 : 2), that she had not then seen Jesus. In consequence of her report, Peter and John went with such haste to the sepulchre (John 20 : 3, 4), that Mary Magdalene, who started with them, was unable to keep pace with them, and therefore did not reach the sepulchre until some time after. But before Peter and John reached the place, the other women had left, at the direction of the angel, to inform the disciples of what they had seen and heard. Now as these women could not have remained long at the sepulchre, and as Mary Magdalene who came with them, had to travel the whole distance back to the city to inform Peter and John of what had happened, some time must have elapsed after they left, before Peter and John reach-

his disciples, behold, <sup>g</sup> Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

10 Then said Jesus unto them,

<sup>g</sup> See Ma. 16 : 9 ; Jn. 20 : 14.

ed the sepulchre, and a still longer time before Mary Magdalene herself came up, which was not until the two disciples had left the tomb, on their return to the city. All this shows that the women must even have reached the city before Mary came to the sepulchre the second time. But it was on their way to the city, that they were met by Jesus, which shows conclusively that he had not yet been seen by Mary Magdalene. This argument is still stronger, when we take into consideration, that Mary appears to have stood some little time at the sepulchre weeping (John 20 : 11), before she looked in and saw the vision of angels, and was afterwards accosted by Jesus himself.

But how is this to be reconciled with Mark, who says (16 : 9) that our Lord appeared *first* to Mary Magdalene? It may be replied to this, that Mark speaks only of the *three* appearances of our Lord, which he himself relates, the first of which was that made to Mary Magdalene. As Dr. Robinson well remarks, *first* is not here used *absolutely* but *relatively*. So the last of the three appearances noted by Mark (16 : 14) was made unto the Eleven, as they sat at meat, where *last* instead of *afterward* would be the correct translation. But this was not absolutely the *last* appearance of Christ to his disciples, while on earth. This shows that *first* in Mark 16 : 9 is not to be taken, as denoting strictly the first appearance of our Lord after his resurrection, but the first of his appearances as related by Mark. It is however the taking *first* in its absolute sense in Mark, that has led to the general but erroneous impression, that our Lord's first appearance was to Mary of Magdala.

*All hail.* See N. on 26 : 49. *And they came.* They approached him, although doubtless with fear and hesita-

Vol. I.—18

tion, as appears from the encouraging words of Jesus, in the next verse. *Held him by the feet*, in the manner of suppliants, who prostrated themselves and embraced the feet or knees of those whose protection they sought. *Worshipped him.* There must have been an awe and reverence in this act of prostration, which they had never previously felt, when doing homage to him as their Master and religious teacher. Still we can hardly suppose them yet so enlightened, as to understand his claims to divine adoration.

11 ¶ Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch

<sup>h</sup> See Jn. 20 : 17 ; Ro. 8 : 29 ; He. 2 : 11.

tion, as appears from the encouraging words of Jesus, in the next verse. *Held him by the feet*, in the manner of suppliants, who prostrated themselves and embraced the feet or knees of those whose protection they sought. *Worshipped him.* There must have been an awe and reverence in this act of prostration, which they had never previously felt, when doing homage to him as their Master and religious teacher. Still we can hardly suppose them yet so enlightened, as to understand his claims to divine adoration.

10. *Be not afraid.* Their fear was natural at sight of a person, whom they knew to have been dead, and the more easily excited from the previous vision of angels, at which they were said by Mark, to have been greatly affrighted. But Jesus now reassures them, and dismisses them with a message to the disciples, that they should meet him in Galilee, as he had before told them (26 : 32).

In order to keep the chain of events in unbroken connection, the reader should turn to Luke 24 : 9-11, where we are told of the return of these women to the city. The visit of Peter and John to the sepulchre, on the report of Mary Magdalene, that the body of Jesus had been removed, may then be read in John 20 : 3-10 ; Luke 24 : 12. The second visit of Mary Magdalene to the tomb (Mark 16 : 9-11 ; John 20 : 11-18) comes next in order, after which the narration, as carried on by Matthew, may be resumed.

11-15. REPORT OF THE WATCH. *Jerusalem.* First day of the Week.

11. *When they were going*, i. e. while the women were on their way to the city. This throws additional light on the argument under v. 9, that Jesus appeared first of all to these women. One of the first steps, which the guard would take after their recovery from



came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had

their swoon of terror, would be to report the strange events to the chief priests, yet the women were returning to the city, when the report was being made. How could Mary of Magdala have traversed the distance, between the city and tomb three times, wept at the sepulchre (John 20 : 11), and then had the interview with Jesus, in time for him to meet the other women before they reached the city, although, as we are told they ran with fear and joy to bring word to the disciples, and had left the tomb some time previous even to the visit of Peter and John? *Some of the watch.* The guard had fled in consternation from the place, but some of them, perhaps the officers, had so far recollected themselves, as to repair to the chief priests, and inform them of the events which had taken place. *Showed unto the chief priests*, i. e. Annas and Caiaphas, under whose immediate authority they had acted (see 27 : 65), and to whom therefore they were to make their report. *All the things that were done, or that had taken place.* There is a natural proneness to exaggeration, especially among the low and ignorant, when recounting any wonderful appearance. But there was no necessity for it in the present instance. The earthquake, the dazzling angelic appearance, the rolling away of the great stone, all constituted such a sight, as the eye of no Roman soldier had ever before rested upon.

12. *And when they were assembled, &c.* The report filled them with amazement. Its truth they had no reason to doubt. They well knew that no Roman soldier would frame a falsehood, when, by thus doing he would put his life in jeopardy. The man whose death they had planned and compassed, and whose body they had guarded with such jealous care, was reported to them as risen from the dead, and that too in such circumstan-

taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

ces, as showed that it was not the result of some juggling imposition, but of the direct and manifest interposition of God. There seemed to be no way of evading the truth of this marvellous event. They had no resource but to convene the Sanhedrim, and refer the matter to their united wisdom and counsel. The meeting of this body could hardly have been an open and general one. The nature of their deliberation, and the compact with the soldiers, indicate that, at least, none of those suspected of being friends to Jesus were present. *Had taken counsel.* See N. on 12 : 14. *Gave large money*, i. e. a large sum of money. It must have been a very tempting bribe, to induce a Roman guard to confess to so capital a delinquency, as sleeping on their post. If, as was promised, the chief priests and rulers succeeded in persuading Pilate to pardon them, they would yet be disgraced for ever in the estimation of their comrades.

13. *His disciples, &c.* It has often been remarked, that this testimony was absurd and worthless. It was absurd, for who could believe that the whole guard would fall asleep, when death was the sure penalty of such remissness; or that the timid disciples would dare to approach the sepulchre, for the purpose of stealing the body, while it was guarded by a band of Roman soldiers? And had they possessed the courage and resolution to have done this, how sound must have been the sleep of the guard, that not one of them awoke at the noise, which must of necessity have been made, in the effort to remove so large a stone. The testimony was also worthless. No one can testify to a thing done while he was asleep. But such was the blind confidence reposed in the priests and rulers by the mass of the people, that this absurd refutation of Christ's resurrec-

14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported

tion, was current among the Jews, even to the time when Matthew wrote his gospel, which was some thirty years afterwards.

14. *If this come, &c.* As Pilate would in a few days depart to his head quarters at Cæsarea, there was some ground to hope, that the report of this transaction would not come to his ears before he left the city. *We will persuade him, &c.* This implies every means of influence, such as entreaties, gifts, &c. *Secure you*; literally, *make you without care*, secure you from punishment.

15. *This saying* or account of the affair, that the body of Jesus had been taken clandestinely from the tomb. *Is commonly reported*, i. e. is the common explanation of the matter. This was the story trumped up to parry off the force of the apostles' testimony, that Jesus rose from the dead. *Until this day*, i. e. until the time when Matthew wrote his gospel.

The reader who would follow the order of events, will now turn to 1 Cor. 15 : 5 (compare Luke 24 : 34), where Christ is said to have been seen by Cephas (i. e. Peter), and also to that beautiful narrative in Luke 24 : 13-35 (see also Mark 16 : 12, 13), of his appearance to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus. The next event in order is his appearance, on the evening of that same day, to the Eleven as they sat at meat. See Mark 16 : 14-18 ; Luke 24 : 36-49 ; John 20 : 19-23 ; 1 Cor. 15 : 5. As Thomas was absent on this occasion, and doubted the fact of his appearance, Jesus condescended to show himself again one week from that time, when his doubting disciple was present. See John 20 : 24-29. This closes his appearances to the disciples at Jerusalem, until after their return from Galilee,

among the Jews until this day.

16 ¶ Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain <sup>i</sup> where Jesus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him,

<sup>i</sup> Ch. 26 : 32 ; ver. 7.

whither they had been directed (see 24 : 32 ; 28 : 10), to repair, and where Matthew now conducts his readers.

16-20. JESUS MEETS THE APOSTLES AND OTHERS ON A MOUNTAIN IN GALILEE.

16. *Then the Eleven, &c.* These are referred to by way of preeminence, although there can be no doubt that the pious women, who had attended Jesus so faithfully through all his trials and sufferings, and others also of the brethren, including Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, accompanied them. *Into a mountain*; literally, *the mountain*, i. e. one designated at the time of the direction to repair to Galilee (see the above citations), or appointed afterwards, if as Steir thinks, this verse hints at some interviews having taken place previously to this in Galilee. Tradition points to Mount Tabor, as the place here referred to. Previous to this most remarkable appearance of our Lord to more than 500 brethren at once (1 Cor. 15 : 6), Jesus showed himself to seven of the apostles, at the Sea of Tiberias (John 21 : 1-24).

17. *When they saw him.* The manner and circumstances of his appearance to this large body of disciples, are not made known to us. There was, doubtless, nothing supernatural in it, except in the great fact which underlies all these appearances, that he was one who had arisen from the dead. We are not informed, where Jesus spent his time during his stay on earth after his resurrection, nor how he subsisted. It is useless, therefore, to indulge in conjectures on this subject. It is sufficient for us to know, that he tarried long enough to give the most indubitable evidence of his resurrection, and of his possessing a tangible, material body, the very one which had been de-

they worshipped him: but some doubted.

18 ¶ And Jesus came, and spake unto them, saying, <sup>k</sup> All power is

<sup>k</sup> Da. 7 : 13, 14; Ch. 11 : 27, & 16 : 23; Lu. 1 : 32, & 10 : 22; Jn. 3 : 35, & 5 : 22, & 13 : 3, & 17 : 2; Ac. 2 : 36; Ro. 14 : 9; 1 Co. 15 : 27; Ep. 1 : 10, 21; Phi. 2 : 9, 10; He. 1 : 2, & 2 : 8; 1 Pe. 3 : 22; Re. 17 : 14.

posited in the tomb. *They worshipped him.* See N. on v. 9. The more correct translation would be, *some worshipped, but others doubted.* They did not doubt whether or no they should worship him. But some, especially of those to whom he had not appeared before, were of so cautious and hesitating a character, that they were unwilling to admit his resurrection, until they had the most positive and undeniable proof. They were like Thomas, who was satisfied with nothing short of tangible evidence of his Master's resurrection. While others, at first sight of his beloved form, prostrated themselves with joy and adoration, they gazed wistfully upon his approaching person, until he was so near, that all doubt was removed of his real personal presence. There can be no question, however, that at the close of this interview, every one present was fully convinced that he had risen from the dead.

18. *Jesus came.* He drew near, and stood in the midst of them, so that all could see and hear him. As they were on the summit of a mountain or eminence, they were enabled to see him approaching at a distance, which gave opportunity for the temporary doubt of some, as to whether it was really Jesus, referred to in v. 17. *All power*, i. e. supreme, illimitable power. *Is given unto me* (see Dan. 7 : 14). Jesus as Messiah, God-man, was subordinate to the Father. The passage before us is based on this subordinate relation. His power as the Mediatorial sovereign, to preserve, defend, and save his people, and destroy their enemies, was given him from God the Father. But this is no objection to his divinity. It is rather accumulative proof of his divine nature. God would not bestow such boundless

given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 <sup>l</sup> Go ye therefore and <sup>m</sup>teach all nations, baptizing them

<sup>l</sup> Ma. 16 : 15. <sup>m</sup> Is. 52 : 10; Lu. 24 : 47; Ac. 2 : 38, 39; Ro. 10 : 18; Col. 1 : 23.

authority and sway upon a created being. Nor could a created intelligence, although ten thousand times more exalted than Gabriel, sustain the weight of such dominion and power, which would require all the attributes of supreme divinity. It might admit also of some question, whether such power, as is here referred to, could be conferred upon or exercised by a created being, inasmuch as in effect it raises him to an equality with God. *In heaven and in earth.* These words are to be taken with *all power*, in the sense of *throughout the universe.* Thus the government of the heavenly intelligences, as well as of the spirits of darkness, has been committed to Jesus Christ. His Mediatorial power embraces in its sway, every created being in the whole universe.

19. *Go ye therefore.* By virtue of this supreme delegated power, he now commissions his disciples to go forth, with a proclamation of pardon and salvation through his blood, to all who will believe on him. *Teach*; literally, *disciple*, or train into discipleship. Not *subdue*, *subjugate*, as the consequence of his unlimited power, but as Alford remarks, "bring men to the knowledge of the truth—work on and in their hearts, and lift them up to be partakers in the divine nature." This was to be done, not by civil enactments or by the arm of secular power, but by instructing men, and teaching the duties and claims of the gospel. *All nations* has here its most extensive signification. In Mark the command is even more explicit: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The whole habitable world was to be evangelized. No nation was to be overlooked, not an individual, to be passed by. To all the message of

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost :

salvation was to be delivered. In the hearing of all, the gospel trumpet was to be sounded. This great and benevolent command is binding on the church now, and always will be, as long as time shall last, and a nation or people remain unevangelized. This command was given, not to the apostles alone, but to all these *five hundred brethren*, proving most manifestly that this is a duty devolving upon the whole church on earth, and the one to which, as long as the necessity in the moral darkness of men exists for its exercise, she is bound especially to gird herself. *Baptizing them*, as an initiatory rite, taking the place of circumcision, and applied according to the Jewish law and practice of circumcision, to both parents and children. The *rule* or *process of ordinary discipleship*, as Alford remarks, "is from baptism to instruction, i. e. is admission in infancy to the covenant, and growing up into the observance of all things, which Jesus has commanded—the *exception* being, what circumstances rendered so frequent in the early church, *instruction before baptism* in the case of adults." The command to *disciple*, embraces these two great parts, *baptism* and subsequent *teaching* or *instructing*, according to the order here observed by our Lord. Yet among all nations where the gospel has not been preached, and in the case of all impenitent adults, who have never received this initiatory rite, instruction must in the nature of the case precede baptism. *In the name*. A literal and better translation would be, *into the name*, which denotes something more than *in* or *by the authority* of the Triune God. It is not so much subjective as objective, being the symbol of an introduction into the covenant of grace, a putting on of Jesus Christ, a profession of subjection, in a new and special sense, to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, of being God's peculiar property, and of entire devotion to his service. The word *name* is here used, as it often is in the Hebrew writings, as an expletive, *the name of*

*the Father* being put for *the Father*. Its use in the singular here emphatically expresses the *unity* of the Godhead, as the words *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost* denote the *tri-personality*.

In this passage is a distinct reference to three persons of the adorable Trinity. The Father, who sent his Son to die for man; the Son, who freely gave his life an offering for sin; and the Holy Ghost, who regenerates and sanctifies the soul of the believer. How could the Son be placed in such a connection with the Father, if he were less than divine? Between the highest created intelligence, which the mind of an angel could conceive, and the Infinite Jehovah, there intervenes so illimitable a chasm, that for the Son, if he were such a created being, to place himself, as he does here, on equal terms with the Father, would be the rankest blasphemy. It would be in direct contradiction to God's own solemn declaration, that his glory he will not give to another (Isa. 42 : 8 ; 48 : 11). The names Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are thought by some to refer to the relations, which have subsisted from all eternity between the persons of the Godhead. The Father, by eternal generation, begets the Son, and from Father and Son is the continued effluence of the Spirit. But it seems difficult, at least to some minds, to avoid the idea of essential subordination of the Son to the Father, which such a view presents. The generator takes precedence of the thing generated; the cause must logically precede the effect. The Father becomes necessary to the existence of the Son, and both to the Holy Spirit. To avoid these difficulties, as well as to meet more accurately the Scripture view of this relation between the persons of the Trinity, it appears better to refer the terms Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to the offices which the Sacred Three sustain in the work of man's redemption, and in which offices the only revelation of the Trinity which we have is made. One of the persons of the Godhead, in the economy of redemption, of-



## 20 "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have com-

n Ac. 2 : 42.

ferred to redeem our fallen race by taking upon himself our finite nature, and, in his complex person of God-man, stooping to a condition of comparative inferiority. But to whom does he sustain this new relation of inferiority or subordination? Not to himself, most assuredly, but to one or both of the other persons of the Trinity. In the light of revelation, we know that this subordination was to one person only, who, in consequence of this official superiority, is called *Father*, and the person who stooped to the condition of inferiority is correlative-ly styled *Son*, while the other person of the Trinity, from his office of Regenerator and Sanctifier by his communicated influence, is called *Spirit*. These are the relations brought to view in the word of God. "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." Ps. 2 : 7; Heb. 1 : 5. "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son." Heb. 1 : 5. "And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world," &c. Heb. 1 : 6. In all these great texts, the relation of Father and Son, between these two adorable persons of the Trinity, seems clearly to be represented, as commencing, when the one was born of a woman previously overshadowed by the Holy Ghost, and on which account, it is expressly declared in Luke 1 : 35, that he was to be called the Son of God. It is worthy of remark that in no instance is the term Son applied to the second person in the Trinity, except in his office work of Messiah, Mediator, King in Zion. Even here, baptism into the covenant of grace, is designated, baptism *into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, i. e. into the duties and privileges of that covenant of redemption, which was founded on the merciful provisions of grace, denoted by these official names of the persons of the Trinity. Beyond this we cannot go. The mode of the divine existence we cannot fathom. Three in One, and One in Three, is all we know of the mysterious and awful being of God, and for this knowledge of tri-per-

sonality, we are probably indebted to the revealed offices, which they respectively sustain in man's redemption.

20. *Teaching them* (i. e. the persons baptized) *to observe*, &c. It will be seen in the original Greek, as well as in our common English version, that *baptizing* and *teaching* constitute the means, or manner, in which all men are to be disciples. Those who believe in Christ are to be baptized, (unless the seal of the covenant has been affixed previously by believing parents,) thus professing their faith in him, and their acknowledgment of him as their Lord and Head. *Teaching* is also a part of the duty of the herald of salvation. Not only are men to be taught the way of salvation, and thus be brought to Christ, but also after conversion, they are to be instructed in the duties and obligations of the gospel, and prepared for usefulness on earth, and the enjoyment of Christ in heaven. *Whatsoever I have commanded*, &c. They had already received many lessons of instruction. These the Holy Ghost was to bring to their remembrance (John 14 : 26). The things of Christ were also to be shown unto them, by the same great Illuminator (John 16 : 13-15). To Paul also was made abundance of revelations (2 Cor. 12 : 7). Thus the apostles were left in no doubt, as to the way of salvation through Christ, and the duties and obligations involved in the Christian profession. But the great fundamental principles of the gospel, which were communicated to them personally by Christ, or through the inspiration of the Spirit, have been handed down in the New Testament to us, so that to the end of time, ministers of the gospel, who go to the word of God for instruction, need be at no loss how to train up believers in the way of Christ's commandments. *I am with you always* (literally, ~~through~~ *all the days*). This promise is another evidence of Christ's divinity. His omniscience and omnipresence are implied in it. He could not be with his people

manded you : and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

to watch over and protect them, unless he were every where present, and knew all things which were taking place at each instant of time. The argument in favor of his divinity, drawn from such passages, cannot be evaded. *The end of the world.* This refers to the end or consummation of all things, when Christ shall appear to judge the world. This passage contains one of the most ample and gracious promises ever given to the church. The word *lo* or *behold*, gives it emphasis. The pronoun *you*, refers to ministers and teachers in the church down to the end of time. To every one who enters Christ's service, with the aim and desire to do good, these words are fully applicable. It is not the Savior in his divinity only, but in his divine and human nature united, as Mediator, Intercessor, High Priest, King, and Head of the Church, who promises to be thus with all his people. This promise extends through all time. *Always*, every day, hour, and moment, with uninterrupted watchfulness and care, will his presence be with his followers, whatever may be their lot and condition. In the palace and cottage, in the abodes of plenty and of want, in the wilderness and amid the crowded haunts of men, wherever on the wide earth is found an humble believer, there is Christ also to bless, guard, and defend from all danger. Nor is this gracious promise confined to any age of the church. Down to the last believer, who shall be brought into the

kingdom, all will find its full realization. Not one shall be passed by, not one overlooked. Glorious and blessed promise, worthy of closing the first gospel written for the church. May it ever prove both a ground of encouragement, amidst the toils and duties of the Christian course, and an incentive to high aims and efforts, not only in the attainment of personal holiness, but in bringing others to the knowledge and love of that Savior, who died to redeem them from sin, and reinstate them in the favor of God.

This ends the gospel of Matthew. The other Evangelists carry the history of our Lord still farther. In 1 Cor. 15 : 7, it is said that "after this (i. e. his appearance in Galilee), he was seen of James, then of all the apostles." In Acts 1 : 3-8, we are told, that "he was seen of them forty days, and spake of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." These appearances took place mostly at or in the vicinity of Jerusalem, whither the apostles returned, after they had enjoyed his presence in Galilee. In Mark 16 : 19, 20 ; Luke 24 : 50-53 ; Acts 1 : 9-12, we are told of his ascension from the Mount of Olives, near Bethany, of the appearance of the angels, of the return of the apostles to Jerusalem, and of their abiding continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Thus the gospel narrative is rendered complete, even to the very time of the ascension of Jesus our Redeemer to heaven.

## PREFACE TO THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

---

THERE has been some doubt, whether the Evangelist *Mark* and *John Mark* mentioned in Acts, are one and the same person. It is most likely that they were. As we are wholly dependent upon tradition for the name of the author, there must ever remain some doubt as to his precise identity. The general belief, however, is that he was the son of Mary, a pious woman of Jerusalem (Acts 12 : 12), and sister to Barnabas (Col. 4 : 10). Having been converted to Christianity by Peter (1 Pet. 5 : 13), he accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Antioch on their first missionary tour (Acts. 12 : 25). At Pamphylia (Acts 15 : 38), he left them and returned to Jerusalem, and there abode most likely with the apostles. On this account he lost in a measure the confidence of Paul, but was afterwards fully reconciled to him (2 Tim. 4 : 11). After the separation of Paul and Barnabas, which resulted on his account, he sailed with the latter to Cyprus (Acts 15 : 39). Some time after this he joined Paul (Col. 4 : 10), and afterwards Peter (1 Pet. 5 : 13), whom he accompanied, according to tradition, to Rome. After this, according to the Fathers, he preached in Egypt, and founded a church in Alexandria, where he is supposed to have suffered martyrdom, about the eighth year of Nero's reign. He wrote his gospel under the inspection of Peter, although we have no reason to suppose him a mere amanuensis of the apostle. It was written in Greek, and published in A.D. 64 or 65, a little before the martyrdom of Paul and Peter. According to Irenæus, however, it was published after the death of these two apostles.

The style of Mark is peculiarly rich and graphic. He brings incidents before his reader, in the most vivid and lifelike manner. Although from his brevity, and close adherence to the events in our Lord's ministry related by Matthew, he has added but few incidents to what we possess in the previous gospel, yet he has retouched the subjects of narration with such a master hand, that we read them with all the interest of a first perusal. Alford says that "Mark relates but few *discourses*, but his object being to set forth Jesus as the Son of God (1 : 1), he principally dwells on the *events* of his official life."

The resemblances and points of difference between Mark and the two other synoptic gospels, will be more fully referred to in the Notes which follow.

# THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK.

## CHAPTER I.

**T**HE beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, <sup>a</sup> the Son of God ;

2 As it is written in the prophets, <sup>b</sup> Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

3 <sup>c</sup> The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

4 <sup>d</sup> John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins.

5 <sup>e</sup> And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 14 : 33 ; Lu. 1 : 35 ; Jn. 1 : 34. <sup>b</sup> Mal. 3 : 1 ; Mt. 11 : 10 ; Lu. 7 : 27. <sup>c</sup> Is. 40 : 3 ; Mat. 3 : 3 ; Lu. 3 : 4 ; Jn. 1 : 15 : 23. <sup>d</sup> Mt. 3 : 1 ; Lu. 3 : 3 ; Jn. 3 : 23. <sup>e</sup> Mt. 3 : 5. <sup>f</sup> Mt. 3 : 4. <sup>g</sup> Le. 11 : 22.

## CHAPTER I.

1-8. See Ns. on Matt. 3 : 1-12 ; Luke 3 : 1-18.

1. *The beginning of the gospel*, &c. This is the caption or title of the book. The preaching of John was the commencement of the gospel, as appears clearly from Luke 16 : 16. Mark commences with this, his object being to give only the official life of Jesus. The word *gospel*, or *glad tidings*, is to be taken here in the sense of *preaching the gospel*. *Of Jesus Christ* (See N. on Matt. 1 : 1), i. e. as its author and subject (Alford). *The Son of God*. This is spoken of Jesus, as the Messiah, God-man. See N. on Matt. 28 : 19.

2. *As it is written*. Some take vs. 2, 3, independently, but it is better to connect them in sense with v. 4. *John did baptize, as it is written*, &c. The citation is from two prophets, Isaiah and Malachi. *In the prophets*, i. e. in the prophetic books of the Old Testament. *Behold I send*, &c. This is a quotation from Malachi 3 : 1. In the original, the Messiah is represented as speaking, "he shall prepare

they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

6 And John was <sup>f</sup> clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins ; and he did eat <sup>g</sup> locusts and wild honey ;

7 And preached, saying, <sup>h</sup> There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

8 <sup>i</sup> I indeed have baptized you with water : but he shall baptize you <sup>k</sup> with the Holy Ghost.

9 ¶ <sup>l</sup> And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was

<sup>h</sup> Mt. 3 : 11 ; Jn. 1 : 27 ; Ac. 13 : 25. <sup>i</sup> Ac. 1 : 5, & 11 : 16, & 19 : 4. <sup>k</sup> Is. 44 : 3 ; Joel 2 : 28 ; Ac. 2 : 4, & 10 : 45, & 11 : 15, 16 ; 1 Co. 12 : 13. <sup>l</sup> Mt. 3 : 13 ; Lu. 3 : 21.

the way before me." As quoted by Mark, Jehovah or the Father (see N. on Matt. 28 : 19) is the speaker. The sense is not affected by this slight change. The prophecy referred in direct terms to the forerunner of the Messiah, and had in John its complete fulfilment. *Before thy face*. See N. on Matt. 11 : 10. *Which shall prepare*, &c. See N. on Matt. 3 : 3.

3-7. On this passage see Ns. on Matt. 3 : 2-11. In v. 7, the words *latchet of whose shoes*, is added to the corresponding words in Matthew. The duty of unloosing the straps, by which the sandals were fastened to the feet, required the person to stoop down, and hence it was regarded as a menial service, and usually assigned to slaves. John did not deem himself worthy of performing the most menial act, to a person of such superior dignity as the Messiah. This was eminently true, when his divine nature was taken into account, as it manifestly was by John.

8-11. See Ns. on Matt. 3 : 11-17. The words *from Nazareth*, in v. 9,



baptized of John in Jordan.

10 <sup>m</sup> And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him :

11 And there came a voice from heaven, *saying*, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

12 <sup>n</sup> And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.

13 And he was there in the

*m* Mt. 3 : 16 ; Jn. 1 : 32. *n* Ps. 2 : 7 ; Mt. 3 : 17 ; Ch. 9 : 7. *o* Mt. 4 : 1 ; Lu. 4 : 1. *p* Mt. 4 : 11.

show that Jesus came directly from his home and friends, to be baptized of John, and to enter upon his public ministry.

12, 13. See Ns. on Matt. 4 : 1-11 ; Luke 4 : 1-13.

12. *Immediately* after his baptism. *Driveth him*, i. e. hurried him on with a strong impulse. Mark's language is here much stronger than the parallel words in Matthew and Luke, and is to be modified and interpreted by them. No physical agency was exerted upon Jesus by Satan. *Into the wilderness*. See N. on Matt. 4 : 1.

13. *And he was there*, &c. It appears from Mark, that our Lord underwent the temptations of Satan, during the whole time he was in the wilderness, while from Matt. (4 : 3), it would seem that the tempter came to him, after the forty days were ended. His mind was probably troubled, during the whole time, with the wicked suggestions of the adversary, but the great assaults upon his integrity, were reserved to the close, and to these only Matthew refers. Mark omits the circumstances of the temptation, which are fully narrated by Matthew and Luke. *The wild beasts*. The article gives to the expression a generic sense. The same is true of *the angels*, in the next clause. This use of the article is quite common. The scene of the temptation was one of the wildest portions of the desert, the haunt of savage beasts. It was after the tempta-

wilderness forty days tempted of Satan ; and was with the wild beasts ; <sup>p</sup> and the angels ministered unto him.

14 <sup>q</sup> Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, <sup>r</sup> preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 And *saying*, "The time is fulfilled, and 'the kingdom of God is at hand : repent ye, and believe the gospel.

*q* Mt. 4 : 12. *r* Mt. 4 : 23. *s* Da. 9 : 25 ; Ga. 4 : 4 ; Ep. 1 : 10. *t* Mt. 3 : 2, & 4 : 17.

tion, that the angels ministered unto him (see N. on Matt. 4 : 11), for Luke expressly says, that during the forty days he did eat nothing.

14. On the interval of time and the incidents which occurred therein, between the temptation and the appearance of Jesus in Galilee, see N. on Matt. 4 : 12. *After that John*, &c. See N. on Matt. 4 : 12. *Preaching the gospel*, &c. See N. on Matt. 4 : 23.

15. *The time is fulfilled*, i. e. the time spoken of by the prophets, when the Messiah was to appear. The Jews, who read with care the prophecies, especially that of Daniel (9 : 24-27), were at this time in a state of earnest expectation of the Messiah. Simeon and Anna, although of great age, were waiting with confident hope, that they should be permitted to see the Lord's Christ before their death (see Luke 2 : 25-38). It should be noted also, that this expectation of the appearance of a great personage, was not confined to Judea, but extended over the civilized world. *The kingdom*, &c. See N. on Matt. 4 : 17. *Repent ye*. This was the burden of John's preaching. See N. on Matt. 3 : 2. *Believe the gospel* (literally, *believe in the gospel*), i. e. believe in the Messiah, who is now to be preached unto you, and trust in him for salvation. The word *gospel*, is here to be taken in its general sense, *good tidings*, but a Jew would understand it at once, as referring to the Messiah.

16 <sup>u</sup> Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon, and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

18 And straightway they forsook <sup>z</sup> their nets, and followed him.

19 <sup>v</sup> And when he had gone a little further thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets.

20 And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the

<sup>u</sup> Mat. 4: 18; Lu. 5: 4. <sup>z</sup> Mat. 19: 27; Lu. 5: 11. <sup>y</sup> Mat. 4: 21. <sup>z</sup> Mat. 4: 13; Lu. 4: 31.

16-20. See Ns. on Matt. 4: 18-22; Luke 5: 1-11. The expression *hired servants* in v. 20, shows that Zebedee was a man, whose means and business were such, that besides his two sons, he had hired men in his employ. This may throw some light on the acquaintance of John with the high priest (see John 18: 15), which shows that the family was neither poor nor obscure in Galilee.

21, 28. With these verses, Luke 4: 31-37 is parallel. *They went into Capernaum.* This was immediately or soon after he had called Peter, James, and John. *Straightway.* He went without delay into the synagogue, as soon as the hour for the synagogue-worship arrived. *On the sabbath day.* The next sabbath after the calling of the above-mentioned disciples. *Into the synagogue, &c.* See N. on Matt. 4: 23.

22, 23. *They were astonished, &c.* See N. on Matt. 7: 28, 29. *With an unclean spirit* (see N. on Matt. 4: 24); literally, *in an unclean spirit.* Alford thinks that this, like the expressions *in the Lord, in Christ,* expresses the element in which the man lived and

hired servants, and went after him.

21 <sup>z</sup> And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.

22 <sup>a</sup> And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

23 <sup>b</sup> And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

24 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

25 And Jesus <sup>d</sup> rebuked him,

<sup>a</sup> Mat. 7: 28. <sup>b</sup> Lu. 4: 33. <sup>c</sup> Mt. 8: 29. <sup>d</sup> Ver. 34.

moved, as possessed and interpenetrated by the evil spirit. *He cried out.* It was the unclean spirit speaking through the organs of the man. *Let us alone.* The translators supplied the pronoun *us*, from the following clause. There was but one impure spirit in this man, but he spoke as it were, for those who had entered into others. So banded were they together, that the expulsion of one by Jesus, was a blow felt by all. *What have we to do with thee,* i. e. what is there common to you and us? Why should you interfere with us? See N. on Matt. 8: 29. *Art thou come, &c.* See also N. on Matt. 8: 29. *I know thee, &c.* On the evidence, which this knowledge of our Savior's true character furnishes, of the reality of demoniacal possessions, see N. on Matt. 8: 29. *The Holy One of God,* i. e. the Messiah. See Luke 1: 35.

25. *Jesus rebuked him,* i. e. the evil spirit. This again shows that it was not a mere disease with which the man was afflicted. Diseases are not commanded to hold their peace, nor do they give the diseased person supernatural

saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

26 And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

27 And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

28 And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

e Ch. 9: 20.

knowledge, nor do they utter the cry of rage and despair, when they leave him. On the general subject of demoniacal possession, see N. on Matt. 4: 23.

26. *And when the unclean spirit had torn him.* The literal translation would here be better, *and the unclean spirit having thrown him into spasms or convulsions.* He was obliged to obey the potent voice of Jesus, but in doing so, inflicted all the evil he could upon the miserable man, whom he possessed. *Cried with a loud voice.* The spasm or convulsion was attended with a loud shriek of rage, which, through the organs of the man, he uttered as he came out.

27. *They were all amazed.* This expulsion of the demon took place in the synagogue, in the presence of all the people. They saw the man, and heard the voice of the demon, and also the tone of authority, with which Jesus commanded him to come out. All this was so new and strange, that they openly expressed their amazement. *What new doctrine* (i. e. kind of teaching) *is this?* The ground of their inquiry is contained in the following clause: *for with authority* (i. e. as one having power self-derived and independent) *commandeth he* (the teacher) *even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.* They reasoned correctly,

29 <sup>f</sup> And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

30 But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever; and anon they tell him of her.

31 And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

32 <sup>g</sup> And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him

<sup>f</sup> Mat. 8: 14; Lu. 4: 38.

<sup>g</sup> Mat. 8: 16; Lu. 4: 40.

that a person who could expel such mighty and malignant demons, must be a teacher also of extraordinary doctrines. This miracle, therefore, increased the astonishment, which they had previously (v. 22) felt at his doctrine. These questions are to be regarded, as expressive of admiration rather than interrogation.

28. *His fame spread, &c.* The strange news was spread through the whole region. It formed the principal theme of conversation and reflection. Many began to hope that the Messiah had come to save his people from the Roman yoke, which pressed so heavily upon them. There were some, doubtless, who connected with his temporal reign many spiritual blessings, and a general restoration of the pure and heavenly precepts of religion, which were then covered up beneath cumbrous and unmeaning ceremonial rites and observances. The stupendous miracle, which had turned all eyes upon Jesus, awakened also the hostility of the scribes and priests, for Jesus paid them no homage, and his teachings from the very outset, were diametrically opposed to their vain traditions and hypocritical pretensions.

29-34. See Ns. on Matt. 8: 14-17; Luke 4: 38-41.

32. *At even, &c.* The Jewish sab-

all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.

33 And all the city was gathered together at the door.

34 And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and <sup>4</sup>suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.

35 And <sup>1</sup>in the morning, rising

<sup>h</sup> Ch. 3: 12; Lu. 4: 41; see Acts 16, 17, 18.

bath ended at sunset. *All that were diseased.* Luke: "sick with divers diseases." See also v. 34. Upon these he laid his hand (Luke 4: 40), as a visible connection of his power to heal, with the effect which followed. See N. on Matthew 8: 3. *And all the city, &c.* A very common hyperbole, meaning that a great many people of the city were thus assembled. *At the door of Peter's house. He healed many.* This does not imply that he did not heal all the sick who were brought to him. He healed *all*, and they were *many*. Thus there is no disagreement of Mark with Matthew, who says, "he healed all who were sick." *And suffered not, &c.* The reason is given in the next clause, *because they knew him.* The time had not yet come for the open proclamation of him as Messiah. Had it been done, the jealousy and hostility of the priests and rulers would have been so excited, as to interfere at once with his labors. We see how this was done in the latter part of his ministry, when he made more open avowals of his office and character. The rage of these wicked men was so excited, that he was shortly after apprehended and put to death. It is worthy of note, that these demons not only recognized and acknowledged his Messiahship, but at his command came forth in silence, thus showing conclusively, that they were not, as some assert, mere personifications of diseases.

35-39. See Luke 4: 42-44.

35. *In the morning, &c.* literally, *very early* (but) *yet in the night.* It was just as the day began to break, while the shades of night yet rested upon the

up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

36 And Simon and they that were with him followed after him.

37 And when they had found him, they said unto him, All *men* seek for thee.

38 And he said unto them,

<sup>i</sup> Lu. 4: 42.

earth. So Luke: "and when it was day." *Into a solitary place.* He would there be less liable to interruption. We have here the example of our Lord, to make prayer the first duty of the day, and to secure a place of as much privacy as possible, in order that freedom and fervor of devotion may not be checked, through fear of being overheard or interrupted. Barnes well remarks: "If Jesus prayed, how much more important is it for us! If *he* did it in the morning, how much more important is it for *us*, before the world gets possession of our thoughts, before Satan fills us with unholy feelings."

36. *They that were with him, i. e.* Andrew, James, and John. *Followed after him.* The verb here signifies to *follow hard after*, with the desire of finding. The disciples had found such enjoyment in his society, that they could not endure his absence, and finding when they arose in the morning, that he had left the house, they sally forth to seek him.

37. *When they had found him.* He had selected a place of such privacy, that they evidently had to make no little search to find him. *All men seek for thee, i. e.* are anxious for thy return. This was said to induce him to return to the house, and resume his discourses and miraculous cures. Luke says, "the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them." They either followed the disciples, on their search for Jesus, or Peter and his companions spoke in their name. The former is the more likely conjecture.

38. *Let us go into the next towns, i. e.*



<sup>k</sup> Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for <sup>l</sup> therefore came I forth.

39 <sup>m</sup> And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.

40 ¶ <sup>n</sup> And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

<sup>k</sup> Lu. 4 : 43. <sup>l</sup> Is. 61 : 1 ; Jn. 16 : 28, & 17 : 4.

into the neighboring villages. These towns were places of a size between a city and village, mostly unwall'd, of which Josephus says there were many in Galilee. *That I may preach there also.* The gospel was provided for all, and was, therefore, to be preached to all. Our Savior could not tarry long at one place, for with all his zeal and diligence, he found himself unable to visit personally all the towns and villages, and was obliged to send forth his disciples, first the Twelve, and afterwards the Seventy. *For therefore*, i. e. to preach the gospel. This was his great business. He had a mission to fulfill, and he rested not until it was accomplished. *Came I forth* from God. It is not likely, that these words in their high and solemn sense, were at that time understood by the disciples. In respect to this whole clause, it may be remarked, that it does not teach, that the only object for which Christ came from above, was simply to preach the gospel. He came to suffer and die for the sin of the world. But the gospel, in its offer of salvation to all who believe in Jesus, is founded upon his atoning death, so that in providing and preaching the gospel, is implied the great work of the atonement on which it rests. In this comprehensive sense, the gospel is frequently to be taken.

39. *In their synagogues.* See N. on Matt. 4 : 23. In the early part of his ministry, our Lord preached mostly in the synagogues. Afterwards, when the people followed him from place to place by thousands, he was obliged to

41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth *his* hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will ; be thou clean.

42 And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.

43 And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away ;

<sup>m</sup> Matt. 4 : 23 ; Lu. 4 : 44. <sup>n</sup> Mt. 8 : 2 ; Lu. 5 : 12.

address them in the open air, from a ship anchored near the shore, or from some eminence, where he could be seen and heard by all. *All Galilee.* See N. on Matt. 2 : 22. *Cast out devils.* See N. on Matt. 4 : 24.

40-44. See N. on Matt. 8 : 4, also Luke 5 : 12-16. The account of this healing of the leper, is more full and circumstantial in Mark and Luke than in Matthew.

40-45. See Ns. on Matt. 8 : 2-4 ; Luke 5 : 12-16.

40, 41. *Beseeching him, &c.* His importunity and suppliant posture show the depth and intensity of his desire to be healed, and his confidence in the power of Jesus to do it. *Moved with compassion.* See N. on Matt. 9 : 36.

42. *As soon as he had spoken, &c.* The loathsome signs of leprosy, at the word of Jesus, instantaneously disappeared from the leper, and he rejoiced in the conscious possession of perfect health. What a change ! Well has this incident been selected as a type of the loathsome disease of sin, and the power of Jesus' blood to wash it away, when the penitent sinner applies to Him for pardon and remission of sin.

43. *And he straitly charged, &c.* See N. on Matt. 9 : 30. *Forthwith sent him away.* It was very desirable to obtain the priest's certificate to his being cleansed, before the news reached him of the manner in which the cure was effected. Hence our Lord sent him forthwith to Jerusalem, without permitting him to tarry in his town, as he would naturally wish to do, in order to

44 And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things ° which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

45 <sup>p</sup> But he went out, and began to publish *it* much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly

o Le. 14 : 3, 4, 10; Lu. 5 : 14. p Lu. 5 : 15.

receive the congratulations of his friends, on his sudden and wonderful cure. See N. on Matt. 8 : 4. For the *cleansing*, i. e. for the sake of accomplishing the ceremonial purification. The man was not ceremonially clean, until the priest had declared him to be so, and had made an atonement for him as prescribed in Levit. 14 : 4, 10-20.

45. *He went out*, i. e. he left the place where the cure had been effected. He may have been cured in a house or in the city, but nothing definite can be obtained from the words *he went out*, except that he left the place, where the miracle was wrought. *Began to publish it much*, &c. His joy was so excessive, that he could not refrain from telling others of his marvellous cure. In this he disobeyed Jesus. He was strictly charged to say nothing to any man. He ought to have obeyed this command. Yet, doubtless, his offence, which resulted from his uncontrollable joy, rather than from a disobedient spirit, was forgiven by his compassionate Savior. *To blaze abroad*, i. e. to publicly proclaim. He did not confine the recital of his cure to his friends, but told it through the whole country, and bid every diseased and afflicted person go to Jesus. *The matter*, i. e. the account of his healing. *Insomuch that Jesus*, &c. The whole country was excited by the story of the leper. Multitudes came to Jesus, bringing their sick and infirm. With such numbers in his train, had he entered any city or town, he would have been arrested as a seditious person. Nor could any town or village have received so great a multi-

enter into the city, but was without in desert places: ° and they came to him from every quarter.

## CHAPTER II.

AND again ° he entered into Capernaum after *some* days; and it was noised that he was in the house.

q Ch. 2 : 13. a Mt. 9 : 1; Lu. 5 : 18.

tude, without seriously incommoding the inhabitants. For this reason he resorted to desert places without the city, whither the people flocked to him from every quarter. Luke says, "he withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed," where the original Greek is very emphatic, *he was withdrawing himself and praying*, referring to his habit of secret devotion. There was such general excitement among the people, and such attention given to the preached word, that Jesus spent much time, which others would have given to repose, in fervent, importunate prayer, that the gospel might prove a means of spiritual life to those who heard it.

## CHAP. II.

1-12. See Ns. on Matt. 9 : 2-8; Luke 5 : 17-26. In the account of the healing of the paralytic, Mark enters the fullest, and Matthew, the least into particulars.

1. *Again he entered*, &c. He had previously visited Capernaum, after the calling of Peter, James, and John (see 1-21). *After some days*; literally, *through days*, i. e. some days having intervened. *It was noised*. Although he came in a private and unostentatious manner, such was the general interest excited by his miracles and teaching, that his coming was soon known throughout the city. *In the house*, or as we say, *within doors*, the article being generic, although some refer it to the house in which he stopped, while on his former visit. The Greek construction is equivalent to, *he had gone into the house and was there*.

2 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive *them*, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

3 And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press,

2. *And straightway.* This is a favorite expression of Mark, the original Greek adverb occurring in the first chapter no less than ten times. *Inso-much that there was no room, &c.* The house and all the avenues to it, were crowded with a dense mass of persons. *And he preached, &c.* He doubtless took some position, where he could be heard by the greatest number. *The word, i. e. the doctrines and precepts of the gospel.* Its more simple elements, such as the spirituality of God's law, the inefficacy of rites and ceremonies to purify the heart, the necessity of repentance, and a radical reformation of life, and the nature of the Messianic reign, were the themes doubtless descanted upon.

3, 4. *Which was borne of four.* It shows his utter helplessness, that he was carried in a couch or litter upon the shoulders of men. *For the press; literally, on account of the throng or crowd, which choked up the entrance to the house. They uncovered the roof.* Some think that having ascended a neighboring house, and passed along upon the continuous roofs (see N. on Matt. 24 : 17), until they reached that of the house where Jesus was, the bearers of the litter tore off the tiles or roofing, in the place under which they knew Jesus to be. Others suppose that the awning or covering, drawn over the open area (see N. on Matt. 26 : 58), to exclude the heat of the sun, or rain and snow, when large companies were received into the court, was removed, and that the railing or balustrade, which was required by the law of Moses

they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

6 But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

7 Why doth this *man* thus

(Deut. 22 : 8) to be placed around this aperture, to prevent persons from falling, was broken down, so that the couch could be let down into the open court or area, where Jesus was supposed to be. The words, *they uncovered the roof* (literally, *they unroofed or dug through the roof*), seem to confirm the former of these explanations (see also Luke 5 : 19), yet if they can be applied (which is very doubtful) to the removing of the awning and railing above referred to, the latter explanation, which in every other respect is to be preferred, is the true one. The interpretation, which refers it to a trap door which was taken up, is wholly inadmissible, inasmuch as other terms than those here used, would have been chosen to express the act. *Let down* (i. e. lowered) *the bed*, by means of ropes fastened to the poles of the litter, on which the paralytic had been brought.

5, 6. *Saw their faith* manifested in such great pains to bring to him the sick man. See N. on Matt. 9 : 2. *Certain of the scribes.* See N. on Matt. 9 : 3. *Sitting there.* They had taken a position near to Jesus, in order to watch narrowly all that he did or said. From the very first, they were his malignant critics and opposers.

7. *Why doth this man.* The word *man*, is not in the original, and the pronoun is used in the way of contempt, as in Matt. 26 : 61, on which see Note. This shows their envy and hatred, excited probably at first by the little deference paid them by Jesus, and strengthened by his doctrines and teachings, which were the very opposite of theirs.

speak blasphemies? <sup>b</sup>who can forgive sins but God only?

8 And immediately, <sup>c</sup>when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

9 <sup>d</sup>Whether is it easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

11 I say unto thee, Arise, and

<sup>b</sup> Job 14 : 4; Is. 43 : 25. <sup>c</sup> Mt. 9 : 4.  
<sup>d</sup> Mt. 9 : 5.

*Who can forgive sins, &c.* The idea implied in this question was correct. No one but God has power to forgive sin. For any created being to pretend to do this in his own name, would be blasphemy of the worst kind. But their error consisted in not discerning the true character of the Messiah as God-man, and acknowledging the claim of Jesus to that office, supported as it was with such indubitable miraculous powers.

8. *Perceived in his spirit.* This is not to be referred to the illumination of the Holy Spirit, which a mere man might receive, but to our Lord as God-man, possessing a divine and human nature. To this complex person belonged the attribute of omniscience, and hence he knew the secret thoughts and reasonings of these wicked scribes, as here affirmed. This text is therefore very properly referred to, in proof of the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Within themselves.* "In their hearts" (v. 6), and so in the latter part of this verse. See N. on Matt. 9 : 4. *These things,* called in Matthew, *evil*, inasmuch as these thoughts arose from wicked, envious, and unbelieving hearts. 9-11. See Ns. on Matt. 9 : 5, 6.

take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

13 <sup>e</sup>And he went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.

14 <sup>f</sup>And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.

15 <sup>g</sup>And it came to pass, that

<sup>e</sup> Mt. 9 : 9. <sup>f</sup> Mt. 9 : 9; Lu. 5 : 27. <sup>g</sup> Mt. 9 : 10.

12. *Before them all*, i. e. in the presence or sight of them all. *We never saw it on this fashion* (literally, *thus*), i. e. we never saw the like of this.

13, 14. See Matt. 9 : 9; Luke 5 : 27, 28. *Went forth again* (see 1 : 16) *by the sea side.* As no house could contain the vast numbers who came to him for instruction, he resorted to the lake shore, as a quiet and convenient place for addressing them. *All the multitude*, who had gathered in and around the house, where the paralytic was healed. *He taught them.* This must have been near the close of the day, and when he had become fatigued with his arduous and incessant labor. But he did not intermit his efforts to instruct the multitude, who thronged around him. *And as he passed by.* See N. on Matt. 9 : 9. This was on his way to the lake shore. *The son of Alphaeus*, not the person of that name spoken of in Matt. 10 : 3, as the father of James the Less.

15-22. See Ns. on Matt. 9 : 10-17; Luke 5 : 29-39. The feast was given by Levi (see Luke 5 : 29), and is transferred by Mark and Luke to the time of his call, although it did not take place till some months after. See N. on Matt. 9 : 10.



as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many, and they followed him.

16 And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?

17 When Jesus heard *it*, he saith unto them, <sup>h</sup>They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.

18 <sup>i</sup>And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come, and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John

and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?

19 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

21 No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.

22 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new

<sup>h</sup> Mt. 9 : 12, 13; Lu. 5 : 31, 32; 1 Ti. 1 : 15.

<sup>i</sup> Mt. 9 : 14; Lu. 5 : 33.

15. *Sat at meat*; literally, *was reclining* at table. See N. on Matt. 9 : 10. *In his house*, i. e. Levi's house. The pronoun can be easily referred to him from the preceding verse, and we have also the direct testimony of Luke (5 : 29). It is strange that Meyer should interpret it, as our Lord's own house. The change of subjects in the pronouns, as Alford remarks, is no uncommon thing. See Luke 19 : 3, where Meyer, to be consistent, ought to refer the words, "because he was little of stature," to the Lord. *Many publicans* (see N. on Matt. 9 : 10). The presence of so many of this class may be accounted for in the fact, that Levi himself had been a publican. It would seem also from the next clause, *for there were many and they followed him* (i. e. Jesus), that the publicans also had attended upon the preaching of Jesus, and had followed him from place to place, for it is absurd to refer the last words to following him into the house.

16, 17. These verses differ but little

from Matt. 9 : 11-13, on which see Notes.

18. *The disciples of John, &c.* In view of the low state of religion throughout the nation. John, who was himself an austere reformer and ascetic, imposed upon his disciples the duty of frequent fastings. The Pharisees also, from far different motives, fasted often (see Luke 18 : 12), and taught their disciples thus to do (Luke 5 : 33). *Used to fast*; literally, *were fasting*, which may refer to their keeping a fast, at that particular time, but more probably their practice or custom. *They come.* In Matthew, "the disciples of John," on which see Note. Probably at or near the same time, the question was proposed to him by both these classes of disciples.

19-22. See N. on Matt. 9 : 15-17. The words in v. 19, *as long as they have*, &c. are found only in Mark, which shows that he was not, as some think, a mere abridger of previously written gospels.

23-28. See Ns. on Matt. 12 : 1-8 ;

wine must be put into new bottles.

23 ¶<sup>k</sup> And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, <sup>l</sup>to pluck the ears of corn.

24 And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?

25 And he said unto them, Have ye never read <sup>m</sup>what David did, when he had need, and was

<sup>k</sup> Mt. 12: 1; Lu. 6: 1. <sup>l</sup> De. 23: 25.

Luke 6: 1-5. The accounts of the incident here related, agree essentially, but have such minor points of difference, as to show that the writers were wholly independent of one another.

26. *In the days of Abiathar, &c.* He was the son of Ahimelech, and was the only one who escaped the massacre of his family by Saul. He so soon succeeded his father to the high priesthood, and was so well known as the companion of the fortunes of David, that Mark refers to this incident, as happening in his day. There is no discrepancy between his account and the facts, as they are related in the Old Testament.

27. *The sabbath was made, &c.* The institution of the sabbath was not an arbitrary arrangement, having no reference to the wants and conditions of man. It was designed to promote his temporal and spiritual welfare, and was suited both to his moral and physical necessities. It was made for him, in order that he might have time and opportunity to meditate upon his relations to God, and to prepare for happiness in the world to come. It was made for him, as a social being, in order that he might cultivate those kindly feelings, which the socialities of religious worship inspire. It was made for him, as possessing a body requiring rest and relaxation from daily toil, and receiving no small benefit from the habits of cleanliness and external neatness, which characterize the community on the sab-

ahungered, he, and they that were with him?

26 How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, <sup>n</sup>which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?

27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:

<sup>m</sup> 1 Sa. 21: 6. <sup>n</sup> Ex. 29: 32, 33; Le. 24: 9.

bath day. Whoever then desecrates this day by devoting its hours to labor or amusement, violates the laws of his own moral and physical being, as well as the divine law by which the Sabbath was ordained.

The sabbath was made for man, not for the Jewish nation only, or any single branch of the human family, but for *man*, in the most extensive sense of the term, for man as he has existed from Adam to the present time, and as he will continue to exist, until the end of the world, in want of just such a day as the sabbath.

*And not man for the sabbath.* No one was to be left to perish, through a superstitious fear of violating the sabbath by affording him the needed assistance. No one was to neglect his own physical wants, nor turn a deaf ear to the call of compassion, made by a suffering fellow mortal, nor to withhold care and attention from the brute creation around him, through mistaken notions of the sanctity and obligations of the sabbath. Man was not made subject to an arbitrary law, which placed the sabbath away from and above him, as a day to be observed with superstitious strictness and dread, and during the hours of which, he was prohibited from attending to his personal and necessary wants, and those of others depending upon him, or providentially thrown upon his care. This was not the design which God had in view, when he provi-

28 Therefore ° the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

### CHAPTER III.

AND ° he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.

2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

3 And he saith unto the man

o Mt. 12 : 8.

ded for man the holy sabbath. It was instituted simply and only for his temporal and eternal good, and this renders the violation of the day a greater sin even, than though it were an unmeaning, arbitrary enactment, having no reference to so benevolent a purpose.

28. See N. on Matt. 12 : 8. Mark introduces this supremacy of Christ over the sabbath, as a result or consequence of its relation to man, as shown in v. 27. The sabbath not being an arbitrary enactment but instituted for the benefit of man, the Messiah, who took upon himself the nature of man, and is our great representative, having the happiness of our race, as the object of his mission to this world, is both the author and Lord of the day, and can rightfully alter or abrogate any or all its laws and provisions at his pleasure.

### CHAP. III.

1-6. See N. on Matt. 12 : 9-14; Luke 6 : 6-11.

1, 2. *And he entered, &c.* He had now returned again to Galilee from Jerusalem, whither he had gone to keep the second passover after his entrance upon his public ministry. *Withered hand.* See N. on Matt. 12 : 10. *They watched him.* Luke says that it was the scribes and Pharisees, who thus watched him. This might also be gathered from Matt. v. 14, and Mark v. 6.

4. *Is it lawful to do good, &c.* Most commentators refer this question to the

which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out: and his

a Mt. 12 : 9; Lu. 6 : 6.

Jewish maxim, that not to do good to a man, when opportunity is furnished, is to do evil to him; and not to save life, when it can be done, is to destroy it. But this cannot be regarded as a negative expressed by the affirmation of its contrary, as Campbell supposes, but is a simple interrogation, in which he asks whether his efforts to save life and do good to others, are not more lawful than the murderous designs against him, which they were then forming on the sabbath day. It was this searching inquiry, exposing so fully the wickedness of their heart, which rendered them incapable of any reply. See N. on Matt. 13 : 13.

5. *When he had looked, &c.* He was filled with sorrow and holy indignation, at such wickedness and hypocrisy, and for some moments held his searching eye upon them, after which he turned to the man, and bid him stretch forth his hand (see N. on Matt. 12 : 13). This shows that one can "be angry and sin not." A just and holy displeasure with that which is wrong, and with persons who do wrong, is compatible with the highest love and most ardent desire for the welfare of those, against whose wicked acts and conduct it is directed. *Being grieved*; literally, *being grieved withal*. Our Lord's displeasure was accompanied by the most tender grief, at the conduct of these wicked men. He regarded them with mingled emotions of anger and sorrow.

hand was restored whole as the other.

6 And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took <sup>b</sup> counsel with the Herodians against him, <sup>c</sup> how they might destroy him.

7 But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, <sup>d</sup> and from Judea,

<sup>b</sup> Mat. 12 : 14.

*Hardness of their hearts.* This is metaphorically put for spiritual stupidity and dullness. The word literally signifies, a petrifying, a becoming hard like stone, and then the state of hardness or petrification.

6. *Straightway.* See N. on 2 : 2. *Took counsel.* So enraged were they at his reproof and exposure of their wickedness, that they lost no time in endeavoring to effect his death. *With the Herodians.* See N. on Matt. 12 : 14 ; 22 : 15.

7, 8. See N. on Matt. 12 : 15. Our Lord probably retired to some unfrequented border of the lake, where he could teach those who resorted to him without interruption. *From Galilee,* i. e. from the surrounding towns and villages of Galilee. *Judea.* See N. on Matt. 2 : 1. *Jerusalem,* also mentioned because the capital city of Judea. *Idumea.* This country, in the Old Testament called Edom, was inhabited by the descendants of Esau, and lay south-east of Palestine, along the great valley extending from the Dead Sea to the gulf of 'Akabah, chiefly on its eastern side, which is rough and mountainous. During the Babylonish captivity, the Edomites, who exulted over the miseries of the nation (see Ps. 127 : 7), took possession of the southern part of Palestine as far as Hebron, so that the word *Idumea* is often used by Josephus, and also in the apocryphal books, as including that region. Mark probably refers to this portion of Idumea, which having been subdued was regarded as a part of the Jewish nation. Herod was the son of Antipater, an Idumean. *Be-*

8 And from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and *from* beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

9 And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.

<sup>c</sup> Mat. 22 : 16. <sup>d</sup> Lu. 6 : 17.

*yond Jordan,* i. e. Perea (literally, *that beyond or the other side*), the name given to the region beyond Jordan. *And they about Tyre and Sidon.* See N. on Matt. 11 : 21. The persons here referred to were not the Tyrians and Sidonians, but the Jews who lived on the confines of those places. *A great multitude.* So Matthew : "great multitudes." *When they had heard, &c.* They were drawn to him by the report of his wonderful works; some, with a sincere desire to learn of him the way of salvation, and avail themselves of his healing mercies in behalf of their sick friends; others, through hope of his immediate proclamation of himself as the Messiah, and of his raising the standard of rebellion against the Romans. There was evidently a great excitement through the whole land, by the reports of his wonderful works.

9. *That a small ship, &c.* The reason is contained in the clause, *lest they should throng* (i. e. press upon) *him.* Those who had diseases which did not prevent self-motion, eagerly made their way through the thousands who surrounded him, in order to touch him and experience his healing virtue (see v. 10), while those who were too ill to move about themselves, were brought by their friends into his presence. There was in the nature of the case much jostling and crowding, and lest he should be too closely pressed, and his labors thereby interrupted, he directed this little skiff to await him a short distance from the shore. See N. on Matt. 12 : 15.

10, 11. *For to touch him.* See N.



10 For he had healed many ; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.

11 <sup>e</sup> And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, <sup>f</sup> Thou art the Son of God.

12 And <sup>g</sup> he straitly charged them, that they should not make him known.

<sup>e</sup> Ch. 1 : 23, 24 ; Lu. 4 : 41. <sup>f</sup> Mat. 14 : 33 ;  
Ch. 1 : 1. <sup>g</sup> Ch. 1 : 25 ; 34 ; Mat. 12 : 16.

on Matt. 14 : 36. *Plagues* ; literally, *scourges*. Violent diseases were so called, because they were thought to be sent as scourges from God. *Unclean spirits*, &c. There was such copious exercise of power, that those possessed of demons, as soon as they came into his presence, were at once healed, the spirits, as they were ejected, acknowledging their subjection to him, as Son of God. *Fell down*. This refers to the bodily prostration of the persons possessed, acted upon by the unclean spirits. As Alford remarks, the two are fused together, it being impossible that any but the spirits could have known that he was the Son of God, and the material body of the possessed falling down and uttering the cry.

12. *And he straitly charged them*, &c. See N. on Matt. 12 : 16. Here is additional evidence of the reality of demoniacal possession. The merely sick could have had no special knowledge of his Messiahship, nor did they address him as the Son of God. Had the persons possessed with unclean spirits been merely epileptics, as is claimed by some, they must have been as ignorant of our Lord's true nature and dignity, as those around them. To suppose that epileptics or maniacs were endowed with such superior and indeed superhuman knowledge (see Matt. 16 : 17), is neither the deduction of reason or common sense.

13-19. See Luke 6 : 12-19.

13. *And he goeth*, &c. Luke says

13 ¶ <sup>h</sup> And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth *unto him* whom he would : and they came unto him.

14 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,

15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils :

<sup>h</sup> Mat. 10 : 1 ; Lu. 6 : 12.

that he went to this mountain to pray, and that he continued all night in prayer. He had become deeply affected with the spiritual destitution of the people, and their readiness to hear the preached word. He was about to ordain some of his followers to the work of the ministry, and this he deemed of such importance, that he spent the whole of the preceding night in prayer. *Calleth unto him whom he would*, i. e. such of his disciples (see Luke 16 : 13) as he pleased, in order to select from their number the Twelve Apostles. *And they* (i. e. the disciples) *came unto him*, in the order in which they were called by our Lord.

14. *He ordained* or set apart. Literally, *made, appointed*. *Twelve*, "as the representatives of the spiritual Israel." Olshausen. See Rev. 21 : 14. *That they should be with him*. Constant attendance upon his ministry was not required of the other disciples, but the apostles were to be fitted for their office, by remaining with him, and enjoying private as well as public instruction. *That he might send*, &c. The multitudes in attendance upon his ministry were now becoming so large, that he felt it necessary to send the apostles forth, that all might have opportunity to hear the gospel, and that he himself might have time to visit other portions of the country, than those in which his labors had hitherto been confined.

15. *And to have power*, &c. This was to be an evidence of their commission.

16 And Simon <sup>the</sup> surnamed Peter.

17 And James the *son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James, and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder,

18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the *son*

† John 1:42.

It was also a benevolent provision for the sick and afflicted, that this power to heal was given to the apostles.

16. On the names of the Twelve, see N. on Matt. 10: 2-4. *And Simon he surnamed*, &c. literally, *and he gave to Simon the surname Peter*. There is an omission of some words before this. Some critics supply from Matt. 10: 2, "the first Simon," others, "Simon" only, which accords with Luke, "Simon, whom he also named Peter." This is spoken by way of reference to a previous act (see John 1: 42).

17, 18. *Boanerges*. The reason for bestowing this appellation upon James and John, can only be conjectured. See N. on Matt. 10: 2. The name of Andrew is placed by Matthew and Luke with that of Peter his brother, but in Acts 1: 13, it has the same connection as here.

19. *And they went into a house*. These words have their appropriate place in v. 20, as previous to this, and after the calling of the Twelve, the Sermon on the Mount was preached, which was followed by the healing of the centurion's servant (Matt. 8. 5-13; Luke 7: 1-10); the raising of the widow's son (Luke 7: 11-17); and the visit of John's disciples (Matt. 11: 2-9; Luke 7: 18-35).

20. *And the multitude*, &c. Wherever he went, so anxious were the people to hear him, that they came together in great numbers. It appears from what follows, that the multitude at this time was unusually great. *So that they could not*, &c. Their usual meals were interrupted.

of Alpheus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Canaanite,

19 And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into a house.

20 And the multitude cometh together again, <sup>so</sup> that they could not so much as eat bread.

21 And when his friends heard *of it*, they went out to lay hold

‡ Ch. 6: 31.

*To eat bread* is a Hebrew expression denoting to *take food*. The Greek original gives this turn to the sentiment: they were unable to take food, much less attend to any thing else.

21. *When his friends*; literally, *those from near him*. This is referred by Doddridge and some others to the apostles. It is better, however, to refer it to his relations, who, having heard that he was at Capernaum, came forth from home, to restrain him from what they deemed a course fraught with madness and ruin. *Heard of it*. The words *of it*, are not in the original, and the reference is therefore in general to his acts and doings, his preaching, calling the apostles, denunciations of the Pharisees, miraculous powers, &c. Some supply the ellipsis: *having heard* that he was in the house. But this does not accord with the general scope of the passage. *They went out*. Those who refer this to the apostles, interpret it of the house where Jesus was stopping. According to their explanation, Jesus, without giving himself time to rest or eat, had gone forth from the house to address the multitude, and his disciples, having heard of it, follow him, and by a sort of gentle violence attempt to induce him to come again within, and take necessary rest and refreshment. They would interpret *he is beside himself*, less offensively, *he is transported too far*, in thus overtaking himself with labor, and injuring his health. But the verb, which literally signifies *went forth*, may with equal propriety be referred to the going forth of the rela-

on him : 'for they said, He is beside himself.

22 ¶ And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem, said, " He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

23 <sup>n</sup> And he called them *unto him*, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan ?

24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, the kingdom cannot stand.

25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

26 And if Satan rise up against

l John 7 : 5. m Mat. 9 : 34. n Mat. 12 : 25.

tives of Jesus from their home, in order to restrain him from what they deemed so infatuated a course. *To lay hold.* This does not necessarily refer to physical violence, yet it is not unlikely that they intended, in case he would not yield to their wishes, to take him away by force. They regarded him as deranged, and supposed that his withdrawal from scenes of excitement to the quietness of home, would tend to restore him to his right mind. *For they said.* A consultation among his friends in regard to his course of conduct, is here implied. The result was that they pronounced him to be deranged. It is not necessary to suppose from the words, *he is beside himself*, that his relations regarded him as a confirmed maniac, but only temporarily deranged, or under the influence of monomania. The interpretation of some, that the disciples went forth to repress the people, who were so eagerly pressing on and crowding around the house that they acted like madmen, is not only inapposite, but would require a change in the Greek, both in respect to the number of the verb, and of the pronoun which follows the preceding one.

himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.

27 ° No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man ; and then he will spoil his house.

28 <sup>p</sup> Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme :

29 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation :

30 Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

o Is. 49 : 24 ; Mat. 12 : 29. p Mat. 12 : 31 ; Lu. 12 : 10 ; 1 Jn. 5 : 16.

22. While the relatives of Jesus were on their way from Nazareth, (or some house in Capernaum, if they had previously come there,) to the house where Jesus was tarrying, we are told by Matthew (12 : 22, 23, on which see N.), that a demoniac was brought to him and was healed, at which the people were amazed, and began to inquire whether he was not the Messiah. This exasperated the scribes, who had come down from Jerusalem, and in order to counteract the effect of this great miracle upon the people, they openly charged him with receiving aid from Beelzebub the prince of devils (see N. on Matt. 12 : 24).

23-30. See Ns. on Matt. 12 : 25-32 ; also compare Luke 11 : 14-23.

29, 30. *Is in danger of eternal damnation.* This does not imply uncertainty. A better translation would be, *is exposed to or under sentence of eternal condemnation*, to be pronounced by Christ the Judge at the last day (see Matt. 23 : 33). Alford adopts the reading *sin*, instead of *condemnation*, finding the parallel in John 8 : 24, "ye shall die in your sins." *Because they said, &c.* This was the ground of our Lord's

31 ¶ <sup>a</sup> There came then his brethren and his mother, and standing without, sent unto him, calling him.

32 And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

33 And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren ?

34 And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren !

35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

## CHAPTER IV.

AND <sup>a</sup> he began again to teach by the sea side : and there  
q Mat. 12 : 46 ; Lu. 8 : 19.

denunciation against them, as blasphemers against the Holy Ghost. See N. on Matt. 12 : 31, where this subject is more fully discussed.

31-35. Compare Luke 8 : 19-21, also Ns. on Matt. 12 : 46-50.

31. *There came then his brethren, &c.* His friends had now arrived, and perhaps were listeners to the remarks just made. The word *then* does not express the exact shade of the original, which is resumptive of the thread of narrative from v. 21. The sense will be seen in this paraphrase: *So then his brethren and his mother*, having determined on bringing him away (as was said in v. 21), *came and standing without, &c.* This shows clearly that no reference is had to his disciples in v. 21. *Standing without, &c.* See N. on Matt. 12 : 46. *Sent unto him.* They could not themselves reach him, on account of the crowd.

34. *He looked round about.* This was accompanied by the stretching forth

was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea ; and the whole multitude was by the sea, on the land.

2 And he taught them many things by parables, <sup>b</sup> and said unto them in his doctrine,

3 Hearken ; Behold, there went out a sower to sow.

4 And it came to pass as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up :

5 And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth ; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth :

6 But when the sun was up, it was scorched ; and because it had no root, it withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns,  
a Mat. 13 : 1 ; Lu. 8 : 4. b Ch. 12 : 38.

of his hand (Matthew) towards the disciples, who sat around him as his privileged followers. It is well observed by Alford, that these incidents show that both accounts were from eyewitnesses.

## CHAP. IV.

1-9. See Ns. on Matt. 13 : 1-9, and Luke 8 : 4-8.

1. *He began to teach, &c.* His auditors, however, pressed upon him in such increasing throngs, that he was obliged to break off his discourse, and enter a boat (literally, *the boat*, perhaps the one provided for him on a former occasion, see 3 : 9), and putting off at a convenient distance from the shore, thus to address the people. *Sat in the sea*, i. e. in the boat launched out from the shore.

2-7. *In his doctrine*, i. e. in his teaching. *Hearken.* This admonition shows the importance of what he was about to say. This is repeated in varied form in v. 9. *It yielded no fruit.* It gave



and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

8 And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased, and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some a hundred.

9 And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

10 ¶ <sup>d</sup> And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.

11 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God : but unto <sup>e</sup> them that are without,

<sup>c</sup> John 15 : 5 ; Col. 1 : 6. <sup>d</sup> Mat. 13 : 10.  
<sup>e</sup> 1 Co. 5 : 12 ; Col. 4 : 5 ; 1 Th. 4 : 12 ; 1 Ti. 3 : 7.

promise at first of coming to maturity, but was soon choked by the rank growth of thorns around it.

10-12. See Ns. on Matt. 13 : 10-15 ; Luke 8 : 9-10. *When he was alone* (v. 10), in respect to the multitude, whom he had been teaching. His disciples were with him. *Asked of him the parable*, i. e. the explanation. *Unto them that are without* (v. 11), i. e. not having the intimate connection with Jesus, which was enjoyed by his disciples. This phrase was one, by which the Jews designated the heathen round about. On this account some have thought that the Savior hinted, that the Jewish nation would soon be deprived of the blessings and privileges of the kingdom of God, and become themselves *the people without* (in common parlance, *the outsiders*). But this is, perhaps, making too much of the passage, for in the parallel passage of Luke, it is simply *the rest*, i. e. those out of the circle of his followers (Alford). *Are done*, i. e. are spoken. *That seeing they may see*, &c. See the explanation of this citation in N. on Matt. 13 : 11.

all *these* things are done in parables :

12 <sup>f</sup> That seeing they may see, and not perceive ; and hearing they may hear, and not understand ; lest at any time they should be converted, and *their* sins should be forgiven them.

13 And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable ? and how then will ye know all parables ?

14 ¶ <sup>g</sup> The sower soweth the word.

15 And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown ; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.

<sup>f</sup> Is. 6 : 9 ; Mat. 13 : 14. Ac. 28 : 26 ; Ro. 11 : 8.  
<sup>g</sup> Mat. 13 : 19.

13. *Know ye not this parable*, which is comparatively so plain and easy of application? *How then*, if you are so dull of apprehension? *All parables* suitable for you to know, and yet more obscure than this parable of the sower.

14-20. See Ns. on Matt 13 : 19-23, and Luke 8 : 11-15. *The sower soweth the word* (v. 14). This is explained in Luke, "the seed is the word of God." The word was first preached by Christ and his apostles, but all who have truly preached it since, are sowers of the word, and the same results are to be looked for, as when it was first preached. *Satan* (v. 15), in Matthew "the evil one," and in Luke, "the devil." Such verbal differences with essential agreement, are the strongest proofs of the independent authority of each of the gospels. Mere copyists would have chosen the same verbal forms. *The lust of other things* (v. 19). This refers to carnal lusts and appetites, worldly desires, ambitious views and aims, all of which tend to choke the word and make it unfruitful. See Gal. 5 : 6, 19-24 ; Ephes. 2 : 3 ; 2 Pet. 2 : 18 ; 1 John 2 : 16, where

16 And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground ; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness ;

17 And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time : afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

18 And these are they which are sown among thorns ; such as hear the word,

19 And the cares of this world, <sup>k</sup> and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

<sup>h</sup> 1 Ti. 6 : 9, 17. <sup>i</sup> Mat. 5 : 15. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 10 : 26 ; Lu. 12 : 2.

the lusts of the flesh evidently refer to desires fixed on sensual objects, as pleasures, honors, and the like. *Entering in*, i. e. arising in the mind. These lusts, cares, and anxieties are said to *enter into* the mind, because they are excited and rendered active and powerful by external objects. *And receive it* (v. 20), i. e. assent to it, and give it a lodgment in the heart. This implies that the word is understood. See Matt. 13 : 23.

21-25. See Luke 8 : 16-18.

21. *Is a candle*, &c. The general connection is this : I explain to you these parables, and give you instruction in all things pertaining to the gospel of salvation. You are to consider yourselves depositaries of truth ; and as men do not light a candle or lamp, to conceal its rays by placing it under a bushel, neither are you to withhold from others the knowledge of the truths, which I am now imparting to you. See N. on Matt. 5 : 14, 15. *Under a bed*. This is referred by some to a sort of couch or sofa, having a cavity beneath it, in which a candlestick might be placed. Others more correctly, refer it to the couch or triclinium, on which they

20 And these are they which are sown on good ground ; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirty-fold, some sixty, and some a hundred.

21 ¶ <sup>i</sup> And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed ? and not to be set on a candlestick ?

22 <sup>k</sup> For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested ; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.

23 <sup>l</sup> If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

24 And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear. <sup>m</sup> With what measure ye mete, it shall be

<sup>l</sup> Mat. 11 : 15 ; ver. 9. <sup>m</sup> Mat. 7 : 2 ; Lu. 6 : 38.

reclined at meals (see N. on Matt. 23 : 6), the idea being that a lighted candle is not placed *under*, but *upon* the table. Compare 7 : 4, where the word has this meaning.

22. *For there is nothing hid*, &c. This proverbial expression is introduced in a somewhat different connection from that of Matt. 10 : 26 (on which see N.). There it was intended to show that the character of the disciples, although traduced and loaded with dishonor, would in due time be vindicated and made the subject of praise. Here it illustrates the great principle, that all which Jesus did or taught was to be made known to men, inasmuch as he was aiming at the renovation and enlightenment of the whole human race. *Which shall not be manifested*; literally, *if not what shall be revealed*, i. e. *but that it shall be revealed*; as appears from the parallel, *but that it should come abroad*, in the following clause. The idea is, that nothing is so hidden, that it shall not be fully brought to light, and publicly made known.

23. *Who hath ears*, &c. See N. on Matt. 11 : 15.

24. *Take heed what*, &c. Luke ex-

measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.

25 <sup>n</sup> For he that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

26 ¶ And he said, <sup>o</sup> So is the

<sup>n</sup> Mat. 13 : 12.

presses it, "take heed how ye hear." They were to attend earnestly to what he was communicating to them, so as in due time to make known to their fellowmen the duties and doctrines of the gospel. *With what measure, &c.* This proverbial expression is explained in N. on Matt. 7 : 2. The application is here determined by the scope of the passage. If the disciples improved all their opportunities to instruct others in the way of salvation, they should receive an ample recompense from Him, whose commission they bore. But if they paid no heed to his instructions, or failed to impart them to others, they would to a corresponding degree become the objects of his displeasure. *Unto you that hear with attentive and obedient minds.*

25. See N. on Matt. 13 : 12.

26-29. This parable, recorded only by Mark, was probably spoken next in order to the parable of the tares (Matt. 13: 24-30), and was addressed to the people at large. Macknight and some other commentators think, however, that it was spoken in connection with the preceding verse in Mark, and was addressed to the apostles only, to prevent them from becoming dispirited, at not seeing the immediate results of their labors.

26, 27. *So is the kingdom, &c.* The sure and uninterrupted progress of the gospel in the heart of man, and its universal spread and triumph, is here illustrated, by the growth and maturity of a plant, springing up from seed sown in the ground. It is a beautiful and instructive picture of the "rise and progress of religion in the soul," which has been expanded and illustrated with such fidelity in the immortal work of Doddridge. *A man.* The sower,

kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;

27 And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

28 For the earth bringeth forth

<sup>o</sup> Mat. 13 : 24.

either Christ or his ministers, the idea of sleeping being introduced, to make the picture conform to the habits of a farmer, who takes his usual rest at night, while all the time the processes of nature are going on, and bringing to maturity the seed sown. The hidden, mysterious power and development of the seed deposited in the ground, is the principal idea of the parable, all the other circumstances being the background of the picture. *He knoweth not how.* Having prepared the soil and sown the seed, his labor for the present is ended. Soon the tender plant is seen springing up. An agency wholly unseen and inexplicable, has caused his seed to swell, burst open, and send forth a plant, which, in due time, brings forth fruit after its kind, to perpetuate itself, and supply the wants of man. This process, although so hidden and mysterious, indicates a law of growth and progress, which no one doubts, and the invariable connection between seed time and harvest, imparts to the former, as an essential prerequisite to the latter, a degree of interest hardly exceeded by the harvest, which was with the Jews a continued festival (Deut. 16: 9-12; Jr. 5: 24). In like manner, the rise, progress, and maturity of religion in the soul, although unseen (except in its fruits) and mysterious, is nevertheless real and certain.

28. *For the earth, &c.* This explains and illustrates the closing remark of the preceding verse. *Of herself,* i. e. self-moved, spontaneously. Man's agency is limited to the preparation of the soil and sowing of the seed. The quickening and energizing power resides in the earth itself, according to the great

fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

29 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately <sup>p</sup> he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

30 ¶ And he said, <sup>q</sup> Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

31 *It is like a grain of mustard-seed, which, when it is sown in*

*p* Re. 14: 15. *q* Mat. 13: 31; Ac. 2: 41.

and immutable laws of the Author of nature. *The blade*, i. e. the shoot which first springs from the ground, and grows until the ears begin to form. *The ear* in its green state is here referred to, being followed by *the full* (ripened) *corn in the ear*, denoting its maturity and readiness to be harvested. In all this process, its life and growth is derived from the earth, and whether the farmer sleeps or is awake, the unseen agency of nature is continually at work.

29. *Is brought forth*; literally, *yields or presents itself* for the harvest, i. e. is ripe for the sickle. *He putteth in*, &c. Now the husbandman has something to do. All this rich growth of nature's bounty will fall to the earth and be lost, unless harvested in its proper season. Thus Christ's ministers are to preach the gospel and sow the seed of truth in confidence, that the same Being, who thus gives productiveness to the seed sown in the earth, will render their labors successful, and by the agency of his Spirit, the mysterious operations of whom are as inscrutable to man as the growth of a plant, will cause the seed sown to bring forth fruit to life everlasting. What is true of the seeds of religion planted in the soul of the believer, will also be realized in the general growth and spread of Christianity throughout the world. Its beginning was small, like a grain of mustard seed (see next parable vs. 30-

the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:

32 But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

33 <sup>r</sup> And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear *it*.

34 But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they

*r* Mat. 13: 34; John 16: 12.

32), but watched over by the eye of Omniscience, and caused to grow by divine power, it will eventually reach the consummation foretold in prophecy, when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Hab. 2: 14).

30-34. See Ns. on Matt. 13: 31-35.

30. *Whereunto shall we liken*, &c. See N. on Matt. 11: 16. *The kingdom of God*. See N. on the parallel passage, Matt. 13: 31. *Or with what comparison*, &c. An emphatic repetition of the preceding clause.

31, 32. See Ns. on Matt. 13: 31, 32. *And with many such parables* (v. 33). See N. on Matt. 13: 34. *Unto them*, i. e. the multitude, who were standing upon the shore (see v. 1). *As they were able*, &c. i. e. as they had ability to understand them. He adapted his parables to the mental capacities of his hearers. Thus he gradually led them, by these plain and familiar illustrations, to some insight into the spiritual nature of his kingdom, and the transforming influence of the gospel upon the life and conduct of those, who embraced its truths and requisitions.

34. *But without a parable*, &c. See N. on Matt. 13: 34. *When they* (i. e. the disciples) *were alone*, i. e. apart from the crowd. *He expounded*. This verb is used of the solving (literally, *unloosing*) of enigmas, riddles, obscure sayings, and the like. There were some



were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

35 \* And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.

36 And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships.

8 Mat. 8 : 18, 23; Lu. 8 : 22.

points in these parables, which the disciples could not comprehend. These he explained and made clear to their understanding.

35-41. See Ns. on Matt. 8 : 18-27 : Luke 8 : 22-25 ; 9 : 57-62.

35. *And the same day, &c.* This was the evening of the day, in which he spake the preceding parables. The former evening is here referred to. See N. on Matt. 14 : 15. *Saith unto them, i. e. his disciples. Let us pass over, &c.* This was done from motives of prudence, as well as to obtain some rest from his severe and continued labors. The multitude had become so great, that unless they dispersed, the jealousy of the civil authorities would have been excited. *Other side of the lake.* See Luke 8 : 22.

36. *When they had sent away.* Jesus did this through the agency of his disciples. *They took him.* See N. on Matt. 4 : 5. *Even as he was.* Most commentators construe this with the words *in the ship*, and explain it of their making no preparation for the voyage, but conveying him across the lake, in the boat from which he had been teaching the multitude on the shore. Others connect it with the preceding verb, and explain : *took him just as he was* (i. e. in an unprepared state), *on board the ship.* This would imply that when he dismissed the multitude, he had previously come on shore, after which he re-embarked in the same boat, or some other one which lay near by. This receives confirmation from Matt. 8 : 19-

37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow : and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish ?

39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea,

23, where a scribe offers to follow him, and then another, and another still (Luke 9 : 57-62), after which he is said to have entered into a ship, his disciples following him. The words *even as he was*, might in this case refer to the hurry of their departure, as it was growing towards evening, and they had the lake yet to cross. There is a passage in Thucydides (III. 30), in which the words *just as we are*, are taken by all commentators in the sense of *without any delay*. Xenophon also uses the phrase in the same sense. Such I doubt not is its meaning here. Of course it precludes the idea of unnecessary preparations. *And there were also, &c.* A few small fishing boats were filled with persons, who were so desirous of enjoying still further his instructions, that they resolved to accompany him across the lake. They were doubtless separated from him by the storm.

37. See Ns. on Matt. 8 : 24-27. *The waves beat into*; literally, *cast themselves into*, denoting the force and violence with which they beat upon the boat. *Hinder part* (v. 38), i. e. the stern, where generally is found the most convenient seat for passengers. *On a pillow*; literally, *on the pillow*, which refers it to the *stuffed seat or cushion* at the stern, and now used by Jesus, as a pillow for his weary head. *Peace, be still* (v. 39); literally, *be silent, close the mouth*, i. e. keep the most profound silence. How simple, how sublime! The twofold form of the command gives energy to the expression. The first

Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

41 And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

#### CHAPTER V.

AND <sup>a</sup> they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

2 And when he was come out

served to arrest, as it were, the attention of the elements; the latter enjoined absolute silence. They must not, therefore, be regarded as unmeaning synonyms.

40, 41. *How is it that ye have, &c.* They had witnessed his stupendous miracles, and it was amazing that they should have despaired of safety, with such a passenger on board. *They feared exceedingly*; literally, *they feared a great fear*. They experienced in his presence such awe, as they had never before felt. It was no mortal being, that could thus control at a word the raging elements. See N. on Matt. 8: 27.

#### CHAP. V.

1-21. See Ns. on Matt. 8: 28-34; also Luke 8: 26-40. Mark's account of the healing of the demoniacs of Gadara, is more full than that of Matthew, inasmuch as he recounts the wonderful conversion of one of them, to whom he confines his narration. Such incidents only will be referred to in the comments on this passage, as are not found in Matthew.

1. *Country of the Gadarenes.* See N. on Matt. 8: 28.

3. *Who had his dwelling, &c.* See N. on Matt. 8: 28. *No man could bind him.* Maniacs seem at times to be endowed with superhuman strength, but it is not unreasonable to suppose, that

of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

3 Who had *his dwelling* among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:

4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any *man* tame him.

5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

*a* Mt. 8: 28; Lu. 8: 26.

the prodigious strength of this man was in part, at least, the result of demoniacal agency.

4. *Had been plucked asunder.* The verb in the original is expressive of the ease with which the chains were torn asunder. *Broken in pieces*; literally, *crushed or broken together*, showing the violence and force with which these fetters had been dashed together, as against some rock, and broken in pieces. *Chains* here refer to those with which his hands or arms were attempted to be bound, in distinction from *fetters* applied to his feet or ankles. *Tame him*, i. e. overpower or subdue him, so as to prevent his inflicting injuries upon himself and others.

5. *Night and day.* These words give emphasis to *always*, the idea being that he never left these mountains and solitary places, that he had no lucid intervals, during which he visited the abodes of men. He was a confirmed and raging maniac, which shows the greatness of his cure. *Crying*, i. e. uttering howls of rage and shrieks of anguish, as he was tormented or excited to new acts of violence by the demon within him. *Cutting himself, &c.* He tore and mangled his flesh with sharp, flinty stones, as no knife would of course be given to such a man.

6. *But when he saw, &c.* As he met

6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,

7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by

Jesus immediately on his landing from the ship (see v. 2), this must refer to the more distant sight of him, as the ship was approaching to the land. *Worshipped him* in the Oriental style of prostration to a superior. Olshausen well refers this hastening to Jesus and prostration at his feet, as the act of the man, in contradistinction from the demon within him, who would have fled from, instead of coming to meet Jesus. "With a presentiment of help, the unhappy man, when he came within view of the Savior, hastened to him, and fell at his feet; Jesus commanded the unclean spirit to depart from him, and in an instant his condition was reversed. A violent paroxysm seized him, and under its influence he spake with the suppression of human consciousness, in the character of the demoniacal power, and cried, 'what have I to do with thee?' although he had just before sought the Lord with purely human feelings." Olshausen.

7. *Son of the most high God* (see N. on Matt. 8 : 29), i. e. God who dwells in the highest heavens, and by implication, all-powerful. See N. on Matt. 6 : 9. *I adjure thee by God*, not to be taken in the usual sense, *I charge thee on oath*, but as a strong expression of entreaty or adjuration. Thus Luke: "I beseech thee, &c." Olshausen unnecessarily refers this adjuration by God to the demoniac in his character as a man. But it is the demon who speaks, and charges Jesus by the most high God, whose Son he declares him to be, not to torment him before the time (see N. on Matt. 8 : 29). To refer these words to the man, would deprive them of all pertinency.

8. *For he said, &c.* More literally, *he was saying*, i. e. was in the act of commanding the unclean spirit to come out, when the demon through the organs of the man, uttered the words

God, that thou torment me not.

8 (For he said unto him, Come out of the man, *thou* unclean spirit.)

9 And he asked him, What *is* thy name? And he answered,

given in v. 7. So in Luke the words *had commanded*, ought not to have been translated as a pluperfect, but in the tense of the original (i. e. the imperfect) *was commanding*. It is not singular that demons of such fierce and malignant character, should have interrupted Jesus with their adjurations against an increased degree of punishment, which they had reason to fear, when he was authoritatively commanding them to come forth from the man.

9. *Asked him*, i. e. the demon. *What is thy name?* Both good and bad angels were regarded by the Hebrews as having names. Our Lord did not propose this question, because he himself was ignorant of the name or number of demons who had taken possession of this man, but in order by the reply to show those who were present, the great power required to work the miracle. Olshausen, and Trench after him, regard this question as addressed to the man. But it degrades the whole transaction, to represent Jesus, at this crisis of the miracle, as merely asking the man's name. *My name is Legion*. The Roman legion at that period numbered 6000 men (see N. on Matt. 26 : 53). It is not necessary to suppose, that just this number of demons had taken possession of the man. It is used indefinitely for a great number, as appears from the following clause, *for we are many*, which stands as the reason why the name was given them. What a total dethronement of reason, and breaking up of the whole mental and moral being, must have resulted from this terrible possession of hundreds of malignant fiends. Let no one regard this as figuratively spoken. It were as easy for many demons, as for one only, to enter into and afflict a man, and that this was sometimes the case, is seen not only in the demoniac of Gadara, but in

saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.

10 And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.

12 And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

13 And forthwith Jesus gave

them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand,) and were choked in the sea.

14 And they that fed the swine fled, and told *it* in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.

15 And they come to Jesus,

---

Mary Magdalene (16 : 9). Olshausen has endeavored to show that both in this case, and that of Mary of Magdala, reference is had to the complete possession which sin had over all the departments of their being, that the whole inner man was laid open to the influence of the demoniacal world, and that the sufferer expressed this idea by calling himself Legion, under the impression that more than one evil power was exerting its influence over him. But this presupposes that the man is here speaking, and not the demon through his organs, which is manifestly the case in all this conversation.

10. *And he besought.* One of the demons is represented as speaking for himself and companions. *Besought him much.* He used the most urgent entreaty. Luke says that "they besought him, that he would not command them to go out into the deep," i. e. the abyss where evil spirits are punished. So Mark: *that he would not send them away out of the country.* This shows that the full measure of punishment has not yet fallen upon evil spirits, but that they are permitted to dwell upon and around this earth, in a state of comparative freedom from suffering, the agents of evil to the human race in afflicting and leading them astray. It might almost be conjectured from this passage, that they have their respective localities, to banish them from which would be the same, as to send them down to the abyss (Luke 8 : 31), to be

---

tormented before their time (Matt. 8 : 29).

11. *Nigh unto the mountains.* In most of the MSS., *near the mountain.* The swine were feeding upon an elevated plain, at the foot of the mountain. Luke says "on the mountain," as it belonged to the mountain range.

13. *Gave them leave.* Jesus did not command them to enter the swine; he only gave them leave. It is singular that Trench should suppose, that the devils did not foresee or intend this result of their entering into the swine, and that the rushing of these animals into the sea, was the driving of these evil spirits into the very abysmal deep, which they so much feared. This strange idea is founded on the notion, that when the swine perished, the demons had no place to which they might go, except to the abyss. But could they not remain in the same general locality, to watch their opportunity to get possession of some other poor and miserable human being? A reference to Matt. 12 : 43 (on which see N.) will throw some light on the restless condition of evil spirits, when dispossessed from their dwelling-place in men.

15. *And they came, &c.* The news was so strange and exciting, that "the whole city went out to meet Jesus." Matthew. *Sitting* at the feet of Jesus (Luke), listening to instruction, and expressing his grateful thanks for his wondrous cure. His sitting posture was in itself an evidence of sanity, as raving



and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind; and they were afraid.

16 And they that saw *it* told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine.

17 And <sup>b</sup> they began to pray

*b* Mt. 8 : 34; Ac. 16 : 39.

maniacs are seldom found in this position of rest. *And clothed.* Luke (8 : 27) says that he wore no clothes, not implying absolute nudity, but that his garments were so torn into shreds, that he was as good as naked. He was now provided with suitable apparel, which he was quietly wearing, another evidence of his sanity. The whole phrase might be more literally translated, *both clothed and in his right mind*, denoting the manner in which he was found sitting. *And they were afraid*, not, as some think, that Jesus would do them injury, but being in awe, as in the presence of a superior being. The words, *and had the legion*, have a very emphatic position in the original, being placed after the clause, *in his right mind*. This arrangement removes the apparent tautology of the English translation, the words, as Bloomfield remarks, having the sense : " they see the demoniac seated, both clothed and in his right mind; him (I say) who had been possessed by the demons, who called themselves Legion."

16. *They that saw it.* This refers to the bystanders, who had witnessed the miracle, and could give the Gadarenes a more particular account, than could the swine herds (v. 14), of the healing of the demoniac, and of the agency which the evil spirits had in the destruction of the swine. *How it befell to him.* See N. on Matt. 8 : 33.

18. *Into the ship.* See N. on Matt. 9 : 1. *Prayed him*, &c. They take a low as well as false view of this request (compare v. 20; and Luke 8 : 39), who attribute it to the fear, on the part of the man, that after the departure of

him to depart out of their coasts.

18 And when he was come into the ship, <sup>c</sup> he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.

19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath

*c* Lu. 8 : 38.

Jesus the demons would return to torment him. Such a fear might have been indulged, but his request is to be regarded, as the expression of a grateful heart, to live and die with his deliverer.

19. *Suffered him not* to be personally with him. The reason for this can only be conjectured. The most probable one is, that the man could do more good by remaining in his own city and region, a monument of the stupendous power which had wrought his cure, and a living witness that it was Jesus who had exerted it. This is shown in the reply of Jesus. *Go home to thy friends*; literally, *go away to thy house to the thine*, i. e. to thy family. It has also been well remarked, that the man, while deranged, had been lost to his family, and Jesus in his compassion would not separate him from them, now that he could return home a sane man. It is a low view of the completeness of the miracle, and the power of Jesus to prevent the recurrence of the demoniacal possession, to suppose with Olshansen, that this direction was based in part on sanitary grounds, to keep him from solitude and a recurrence to his old vices. *And hath had*, &c. He could never forget that he had been cured of a dreadful malady, but might soon lose sight of its having been done through the compassion of the Lord. Hence he was to keep this prominently in view, in every rehearsal of the transaction. The tenses in the original are different, the perfect *has done*, denoting the full completion and continuance of the cure; and the aorist *had compassion*, showing the momentary act of mercy,

done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

20 And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all *men* did marvel.

21 <sup>a</sup> And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him; and he was nigh unto the sea.

22 <sup>e</sup> And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet,

23 And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: *I pray thee*, come and lay thy hands on her, *α* Mt. 9: 1; Lu. 8: 40. *ε* Mt. 9: 18; Lu. 8: 41.

which effected the expulsion of the demons.

20. *Decapolis* (See N. on Matt. 4: 25), of which Gadara was one of the cities. *Did marvel* at the stupendous miracle. In Galilee, where Jesus began to be well known, and was already arousing the jealousy of the civil authorities, those who were healed were commanded to keep silence, but in Perea this was unnecessary, and hence the man was commanded to spread the news of his cure abroad.

21. *Unto the other side*, i. e. to his own city, Capernaum. See N. on Matt. 9: 1. *Much people, &c.* Crowds gathered around him wherever he went. It will be seen that the only rest he took, after the excessive labors of the day on which he pronounced the parables (see N. on Matt. 8: 18), was while he reclined on the pillow in the stern of the ship (N. on 4: 38); and now on his return, he is immediately surrounded by throngs, anxious to hear his words and experience his healing mercies. *He was nigh, &c.* He took up his temporary abode near the sea, and there instructed the people.

22-43. See Ns. on Matt. 9: 18-26:

that she may be healed; and she shall live.

24 And *Jesus* went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

25 And a certain woman, <sup>f</sup>which had an issue of blood twelve years,

26 And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,

27 When she had heard of *Jesus*, came in the press behind, and touched his garment.

28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.

29 And straightway the fountain <sup>g</sup>Le. 15: 25; Mt. 9: 20.

Luke 8: 41-56. The raising of Jairus' daughter, and the healing of the woman with an issue of blood, are narrated more fully by Mark, than by the other evangelists. The additional incidents will be referred to in the Notes.

22, 23. *One of the rulers of the synagogue.* These were probably the elders in the synagogue (Luke 7: 3), who had the general oversight of all matters pertaining to the synagogue worship. One of these was the chief director, see vs. 35, 36, 38; Luke 8: 49; 13: 14; Acts 18; 8, 17. *Lieth at the point, &c.* For the reconciliation of this with Matthew's statement, see N. on Matt. 9: 18.

26. *And had suffered, &c.* She had taken much nauseous medicine, and been subject to various kinds of painful treatment from the different physicians, to whom she had resorted for help. *Had spent all, &c.* She was reduced to poverty, besides having become worse instead of better under medical treatment. This shows her wretched and hopeless condition, when she applied to Jesus for aid.

29. *The fountain of her blood,* explained in the parallel passage in Luke,

tain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of that plague.

30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that <sup>o</sup> virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

31 And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude

*g* Lu. 6:19, & 8:46.

*an issue or flowing of blood.* The word translated *fountain*, is often used in classical Greek, for the stream which proceeds from it. The reason for its employment here, may be seen in the words *was dried up*. The discharge of blood ceased, and the fountain or source whence it came, was said to be dried up, as the drying up of a stream of water indicates the drying up of the fountain whence it proceeds. This shows how radical and complete was the cure. *She felt in her body.* Strength and energy were imparted to her, on her first touch of the Savior's garment. She was made certain of her cure, by the immediate cessation of the bloody discharge, and relief from the pain which attended it. This shows that she was then suffering under her grievous malady, and makes her sudden and perfect cure the more strikingly miraculous. *Of that plague.* See N. on 3:10.

30. *That virtue.* Literally, *that the power* (i. e. the healing or miraculous power) *had gone forth from him*, i. e. had been called into exercise and put forth. The power to work miracles was inherent in Jesus, and was not the result of some special grace conferred in each instance by God, as was true of the prophets and apostles. *In the press*, i. e. in the crowd following close upon him, on his way to visit the ruler's daughter. *Who touched my clothes?* He proposed this question, not through ignorance of the person who had done the act, but in order to draw attention to her faith, humility, and miraculous cure, and also to bring the woman herself to an acknowledgment of what she

thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

32 And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.

33 But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

34 And he said unto her,

had done, which he deemed necessary to the full measure of gracious influence, spiritual as well as physical, which he was bestowing upon her, and which would have been restricted, had she been suffered to bear away, as she wished, her blessing concealed and unacknowledged.

31. *And his disciples, &c.* Peter was the spokesman (Luke 8:45), who, after that all had denied having touched him, expressed his wonder that Jesus, in the midst of such a crowd, should ask who touched him.

32-34. *And he looked, &c.* As he did this, he again repeated the assertion that somebody had touched him, inasmuch as the healing power residing in him, had been put into exercise (Luke). *To see her, &c.* i. e. in order to single out the one who had touched him. As he did this, his eye probably rested on the woman, and she *fearing and trembling*—as a poor and timid woman would do, who had been the subject of such a sudden and wondrous cure, and dreaded his displeasure for such presumption on her part—and *knowing what was done in her*, and being thereby inspired with awe, *fell down before him*, and did not attempt to conceal herself any longer from him. *All the truth* respecting the affair in question. See Luke 8:47. *Be whole, &c.* Our Lord confirms the cure previously wrought, and sends the woman away with words of comfort and assurance. *Go in peace; literally, go away into peace*, i. e. into the enjoyment of every kind of good. See N. on Matt. 10:13.

35. *While he yet spake*, i. e. while he

Daughter, <sup>a</sup> thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

35 <sup>i</sup> While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house certain* which said, Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any further?

36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.

37 And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

38 And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and

*h* Mt. 9 : 22; Ch. 10 : 52; Ac. 14 : 9.

was talking with the woman whom he had just healed. *From the ruler of the synagogue's house.* There is an ellipsis of the word *house*, common also in such phrases in our language. The ruler himself was at this time with Jesus. *Thy daughter, &c.* She lay at the point of death, when her father left to seek aid from Jesus (v. 23). She had now expired, and a messenger was sent to apprise him of the fact, supposing that his errand to Jesus would now be fruitless. *Why troublest thou, &c.* Why put him to the trouble of coming to thy house, when the child is already dead?

36. *As soon as Jesus, &c.* This sad intelligence overwhelmed the ruler with grief, but our Lord immediately addressed him with encouraging words, and reassured his faith now so severely tried. The word rendered *heard*, is literally *having overheard*, which implies that the message was delivered to the ruler, in low, subdued tones of grief. *Only believe.* Here lay the ruler's danger. Jesus had equal power to raise from the dead, as from a bed of sickness, but, in either case, faith as a prerequisite was required of the father, and lest it should fail in this great trial

seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.

39 And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but <sup>k</sup> sleepeth.

40 And they laughed him to scorn. <sup>i</sup> But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

41 And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, *Talitha-cumi*: which is, being interpreted, Damsel, (I say unto thee,) arise.

42 And straightway the damsel

*i* Lu. 8 : 49. *k* Jn. 11 : 11. *l* Ac. 9 : 40.

of it, these words of exhortation and encouragement were addressed to him. See Luke 8 : 50.

37. *Save Peter, and James, and John.* See N. on Matt. 17 : 1.

38. *And seeth.* This is used here and elsewhere, not only of the eye, but also the mind, *he perceived, contemplated. The tumult*, i. e. the wailing and lamentation of the minstrels (see Matt. 9 : 23), as appears from the following words added by way of explanation, (viz.) *those who wept and wailed greatly.* This last word, in the original Greek, expresses a shrill and prolonged utterance of the word *alala*, wailed forth as here in lamentations for the dead, and sometimes shouted as a battle-ery.

39. *Why make ye this ado?* 'Why these manifestations of grief? They are untimely. *The damsel is not dead* (as you suppose) *but sleepeth* (see N. on Matt. 9 : 24). Cease then your wailing.' Our Lord does not here forbid the Jewish custom of mourning for the dead, but only asserts that there is no necessity for it on this occasion.

41. *Talitha-cumi.* An Aramæan or Syro-Chaldaic word, the ordinary dialect of the people, *talitha*, a term of endear-



arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.

43 And <sup>m</sup> he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

#### CHAPTER VI.

AND <sup>a</sup> he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him.

2 And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, <sup>b</sup> From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, <sup>c</sup> the brother of James

<sup>m</sup> Mt. 8: 4; Ch. 3: 12; Lu. 5: 14. <sup>a</sup> Mt. 13: 54; Lu. 4: 16. <sup>b</sup> Jn. 6: 42. <sup>c</sup> See Mt. 12: 46; Ga. 1: 19. <sup>d</sup> Mt. 11: 6.

ment, my little girl, "come, my child" (Alford); *cunni, arise, rise up.* See N. on Matt. 9: 25.

42. *They were astonished, &c.* The words are very emphatic in the original. Their astonishment knew no bounds. The raising up of one whom they knew to be dead (Luke 8: 53), transcended any power which they had ever seen put forth. *With a great astonishment*; literally, with a great ecstasy, a word which etymologically signifies the being out of one's mind, as here with amazement. Sometimes, as in Acts 10: 10; 11: 5; 22: 17, it signifies a trance, in which the soul is wrapt up in visions of the future or unseen world.

43. *He charged them, &c.* This was not an injunction of perpetual secrecy, but only for the time being, to avoid the great excitement which such a disclosure would produce. Our Lord was

and Joses, and of Judas, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they <sup>d</sup> were offended at him.

4 But Jesus said unto them, 'A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

5 <sup>f</sup> And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.

6 And <sup>g</sup> he marvelled because of their unbelief. <sup>h</sup> And he went round about the villages, teaching.

7 ¶ <sup>i</sup> And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;

8 And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no

<sup>e</sup> Mt. 13: 57; Jn. 4: 44. <sup>f</sup> See Ge. 19: 22; Mt. 13: 58. <sup>g</sup> Is. 59: 16. <sup>h</sup> Mt. 9: 35; Lu. 13: 22. <sup>i</sup> Mt. 10: 1.

careful not to awaken the jealousy of the civil authorities, by drawing and keeping together, any length of time, great crowds. *And commanded, &c.* One object of this was to furnish the most satisfactory evidence of the maiden's restoration to life and perfect health.

#### CHAP. VI.

1-6. See Ns. on Matt. 13: 54-58. *He went out from thence* (v. 1), i. e. from the city of Capernaum. *He marvelled* (v. 6). This unbelief and indifference to their spiritual wants, as well as neglect to avail themselves of his healing power in behalf of their sick and afflicted, were so great as to excite the astonishment of Jesus. *And he went, &c.* See N. on Matt. 9: 35, which is parallel to this.

7. See N. on Matt. 10: 1. *Two and two.* See N. on Matt. 10: 5.

scrip, no bread, no money in *their* purse :

9 But <sup>k</sup> *be* shod with sandals ; and not put on two coats.

10 <sup>l</sup> And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place.

11 <sup>m</sup> And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, <sup>n</sup> shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

13 And they cast out many devils, <sup>o</sup> and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed *them*.

<sup>k</sup> Ac. 12 : 8. <sup>l</sup> Mt. 10 : 11 ; Lu. 9 : 4. <sup>m</sup> Mt. 10 : 14 ; Lu. 10 : 10. <sup>n</sup> Ac. 13 : 51. <sup>o</sup> Ja. 5 : 14.

8-11. See Ns. on Matt. 10 : 9-15 ; also Luke 11 : 1-5.

12. *And they went out*, &c. They set out on their missionary tour, after having received the instructions more fully detailed in Matt. 10 : 5-42, on which see Notes. *Preached that men should repent*. So John the Baptist preached (Matt. 3 : 2, 8, 11), and thus also preached Jesus himself (Matt. 4 : 17). Luke expresses it (v. 6), *preaching the gospel*, which implies the preaching of repentance, since the promises and blessings of the gospel can be secured, only by such as truly repent of their sins.

13. *Anointed with oil* (literally, *olive-oil*) *many*, &c. It is strange that any should refer this to the mere practice of the healing art, that is, to the application of a certain oil of high medicinal virtue. The application of oil was merely symbolic of the miraculous power put forth, just like the lay-

14 <sup>p</sup> And king Herod heard of *him* ; (for his name was spread abroad ;) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.

15 <sup>q</sup> Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets.

16 <sup>r</sup> But when Herod heard *thereof*, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded : he is risen from the dead.

17 For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife ; for he had married her.

18 For John had said unto Herod, <sup>s</sup> It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

19 Therefore Herodias had a

<sup>p</sup> Mt. 14 : 1 ; Lu. 9 : 7. <sup>q</sup> Mt. 16 : 14. <sup>r</sup> Mt. 14 : 2 ; Lu. 8 : 19. <sup>s</sup> Le. 18 : 16.

ing on of the hand, so frequently practised by our Savior. In this sense, James 5 : 14 is to be interpreted. Oil was a fit emblem of this healing power, both because it was typical of the oil of gladness, with which God anoints his people, and also because in certain cases, as wounds, bruises, sprains, it has great sanatory efficacy. Hence anointing with oil was common among the Jews, in cases of sickness, but in no instance with the accompaniment of miraculous power, as in the case of the apostles. Alford cites as instances of such symbolic use of external applications, 2 Kings 5 : 14 ; Mark 8 : 23 : John 9 : 6, &c.

14-29. See Ns. on Matt. 14 : 1-12. Compare also Luke 9 : 7-9. Mark's account of the beheading of John is more full than that of Matthew, while it is only referred to by Luke in v. 9.

14. *King Herod*. He received the title of king by courtesy, being only

quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not :

20 For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him ; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

21 " And when a convenient day was come, that Herod <sup>r</sup> on his birth-day made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief *estates* of Galilee ;

22 And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king

*t* Mt. 14 : 5. *u* Mt. 14 : 6. *x* Ge. 40 : 20.

tetrarch. *That it is a prophet* (v. 15), &c. Literally, *he is a prophet as one of the prophets*, i. e. a prophet, like those who have preceded him, but not the Messiah. *It is John* (v. 16), &c. The original is very confused, showing the agitation and alarm of Herod : *whom I have beheaded* (even) *John, he it is, he has risen from the dead. For Herod himself*, &c. (v. 17). It was done at his own command, and not, as might have been supposed, by the order of Herodias.

20. *Fearred John*, i. e. stood in awe of him, on account of his sanctity, and boldness of denunciation against sin. *Knowing*, i. e. *because he knew*, &c. The clause denotes the reason why Herod feared John. *Observed him*. This does not refer to obeying his instructions, but to keeping him in close custody, in order to preserve him from the machinations of Herodias. This shows why Herod first imprisoned John. *Did many things* which John commanded. He began externally to reform his manners. *Heard him gladly* (literally, *with the relish with which one eats*). He enjoyed his instruction. He was of the class of stony ground hearers, "who receive the word with joy" (Matt. 13 : 20 ; Luke 8 : 13). But he did not put

said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give *it* thee.

23 And he sware unto her, <sup>v</sup> Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give *it* thee, unto the half of my kingdom.

24 And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask ? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.

25 And she came in straight-way with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me, by and by, in a charger the head of John the Baptist.

26 <sup>r</sup> And the king was exceedingly sorry ; *yet* for his oath's sake,

*y* Es. 5 : 3, 6. *z* Mt. 14 : 9.

away Herodias, as he was directed, nor refuse the head of his religious teacher, when it was demanded as the price for the paltry gratification, which he and his courtiers had received from a dancing girl. This shows how shallow was the soil, into which the word had fallen.

21. *Convenient day* for the murderous design of Herodias. She probably planned the dance, and all the circumstances attending it. See N. on Matt. 14 : 6. Many commentators translate this a *festive day*, but such is not its meaning here, although the day was convenient or opportune, from its being a great feast-day. *Lords* ; literally, *magistrates, great men*. High civil officers are referred to. *High captains* ; literally, *chiliarchs* or captains of a thousand. It here designates any officer of high military rank. *Chief estates* ; literally, *first ones*, referring to magistrates and persons of wealth and distinction, like our aristocratic expression, *first families*.

23. *Unto half my kingdom*. An extravagant promise, even for a king (see Esth. 5 : 3 ; 7 : 2), much more for a mere ethnarch (see N. on Matt. 14 : 7).

36. *And the king*, &c. More cor-

and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.

27 And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison;

28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel; and the damsel gave it to her mother.

29 And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

30 <sup>a</sup> And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

31 <sup>b</sup> And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile; for

*a* Lu. 9:10. *b* Mt. 14:13. *c* Ch. 3:20.  
*d* Mat. 14:13.

rectly translated, *although the king was exceeding sorry. Would not reject her*, i. e. was unwilling to dishonor her by refusing her request.

27. *An executioner*; literally, a *pikeman*, one of his body guard, who, according to Oriental custom, acted when necessary as executioner.

30-41. Matt. 14-31 (on which see Notes); Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-13. The feeding of the five thousand is one of the few incidents, narrated with almost equal fulness of detail by all the evangelists. While there is a remarkable agreement between them in all essential points, there is yet a variety of verbal expression, which shows that they are independent statements, and not compilations one from another.

30. *Gathered themselves, &c.* They returned to Jesus from the mission, on which they had been sent (6:7). Perhaps the same jealousy and persecuting spirit of Herod, which caused Jesus to cross the lake to a more retired place

<sup>c</sup> there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

32 <sup>d</sup> And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

33 And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.

34 <sup>e</sup> And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and <sup>f</sup> he began to teach them many things.

35 <sup>g</sup> And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed:

36 Send them away, that they

*e* Mt. 9:36. *f* Lu. 9:11. *g* Mt. 14:15.

(see N. on Matt. 14:13), hastened the return of the apostles from their circuit. *All things, &c.* i. e. the miracles which they had wrought, and the doctrines they had taught.

31. *Come ye yourselves, &c.* The invitation was addressed only to the apostles, who had now been absent for a season, and needed rest and retirement with Jesus, in order to receive further instruction in things pertaining to the kingdom of God. *Apart into a desert place.* See N. on Matt. 14:13. *For there were many, &c.* These were in attendance upon his ministry. *They had not leisure, &c.* See N. on Mark 3:20.

33. *Many knew him*, i. e. recognized him, as the boat was putting off from shore, to convey him and his disciples across the lake. Some think that reference is had to their knowledge of the point across the lake, whither he was intending to go, so that they were enabled to pass on foot around the lake,



may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread : for they have nothing to eat.

37 He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, <sup>a</sup> Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat ?

38 He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye ? go and see. And when they knew, they say, <sup>i</sup> Five, and two fishes.

39 And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass.

40 And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.

41 And when he had taken the five loaves, and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, <sup>k</sup> and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave *them* to his disciples to set before them ; and the two fishes divided he among them all.

42 And they did all eat, and were filled.

43 And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.

<sup>h</sup> Nu. 11 : 13, 22 ; 2 Ki. 4 : 43. <sup>i</sup> Mat. 14 : 17 ; Jn. 6 : 9. <sup>k</sup> 1 Sa. 9 : 13 ; Mt. 26 : 26.

44 And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

45 And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.

46 And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

47 <sup>m</sup> And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.

48 And he saw them toiling in rowing ; for the wind was contrary unto them : and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and <sup>n</sup> would have passed by them.

49 But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out :

50 For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer : it is I ; be not afraid.

<sup>l</sup> Mt. 14 : 22 ; Jn. 6 : 17. <sup>m</sup> Mt. 14 : 23 ; Jn. 2 : 16, 17. <sup>n</sup> See Lu. 24 : 28.

and meet him, when he came on shore. But this is not the sense of the original.

37. *Shall we go and buy, &c.* There seems, together with surprise, to be a slight shade of censure in this question. 'What, shall we spend two hundred pence in purchasing bread for this great multitude, for in what other way can we give them to eat?' It is not probable that they had more than this sum by them, and Philip, (for it appears from John that it was he who spake,) thought it hardly consistent with prudence, to spend it all in purchasing food for so great a multitude, espe-

cially as it would fall far short of satisfying their wants (John 6 : 7).

39, 40. *By companies* ; literally, *in table-parties*. *In ranks* ; literally, *by plats* or *plat-wise*, the words being used of beds in gardens, laid out in regular forms, as squares, parallelograms. The people sat down in squares or companies of 50 and 100 each, so that the food could be easily passed around to them. It is not necessary to suppose, that each company had just one or the other of the above numbers, and no more or less, or that the squares were formed with mathematical exactness.

51 And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.

52 For <sup>o</sup> they considered not *the miracle* of the loaves; for their <sup>p</sup> heart was hardened.

53 <sup>r</sup> And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.

54 And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him.

<sup>o</sup> Ch. 8: 17, 18. <sup>p</sup> Ch. 8: 5. <sup>q</sup> Mt. 14: 34.

The general number and form, is all that is intended to be represented.

45-56. See Ns. on Matt. 14: 22-36. Compare also John 6: 15-21.

48. *Toiling in rowing.* The expression is emphatic, *laboring or exhausted with rowing. And would have passed by them*; literally, *he willed or proposed to pass by them.* This refers to what appeared to be his intention. See Luke 24: 28.

52. *For they considered not, &c.* literally, *for they understood not at the time of bread,* i. e. they had not supposed from the miracle of the bread—of the amazing greatness of which they at the time had no adequate conception—that he could do so apparently an impossible thing, as to walk upon the water. The word *miracle* is supplied in our English version, without sufficient reason, and contrary to the Greek, which is literally, *they understood not at the loaves,* i. e. at the time when the miracle of the loaves took place. *Was hardened,* i. e. was dull, insensible.

53. *Drew to the shore,* brought the ship to her place of anchorage. Sometimes these boats were drawn up on the shore.

54, 55. *They knew him*; literally, *having known him* (i. e. recognized him, as he landed from the ship), *and having run about the whole sur-*

55 And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.

56 And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that <sup>r</sup> they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him, were made whole.

<sup>r</sup> Mt. 9: 20; Ch. 5: 27, 28; Ac. 19: 12.

*rounding region, they began to carry about, &c.* They took their sick from one place to another, where they heard he had gone or was about to go. *Where they heard, &c.* Literally, *where they heard he was there,* by which Hebraistic pleonasm, the idea is intended, *in whatever place they heard that he might chance to be.*

56. *They laid the sick in the streets,* i. e. along the road where he was about to go, in order as he passed by, to avail themselves of his healing power. *Besought him.* The construction refers this most naturally to the persons, who brought their sick, but it seems more probable, that the sick themselves besought him to draw near as he passed along, and permit them to touch even the border of his garment (see N. on Matt. 9: 20). There is hardly an incident in our Savior's life, more interesting and instructive than this. It exemplifies both the wondrous power and kindness of our Lord, and the faith of these people, who thus brought their sick along the way-side, in order to be healed. Thus should we bring our spiritually diseased friends to the foot of his cross, where only he dispenses his healing mercies, and where whoever comes to him shall experience the most ready and ample forgiveness.

## CHAPTER VI

WHEN <sup>a</sup> came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.

2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen hands, they found fault.

3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their*

<sup>a</sup> Mt. 15: 1.

## CHAP. VII.

1-23. See Ns. on Matt. 15: 1-20.

2. *Defiled*; literally, *common*, as opposed to that which was set apart for a *sacred* use. Food, regarded as one of the greatest of God's gifts, and in a sense rendered sacred by the invocation of the divine blessing thereon, was to be taken with consecrated hands. The Pharisees, always observant of the letter, but unmindful of the spirit of God's commands, understood this literally, and therefore laid such stress on washing the hands before eating, that they judged the omission of this ablution, a crime of equal magnitude with fornication, and worthy of death (Dr. Jahn). However clean the hands might be, unless they were washed just before the meal, they were regarded as ceremonially unclean. The word *defiled*, is an unfortunate translation, seeming to imply that the disciples' hands were literally unclean; whereas it only means, that they had not been washed just before the meal, and were therefore *ceremonially* unclean.

3, 4. These verses explain more fully the Pharisaic observance of the washing of hands, vessels, and the like, and the stress which they laid upon it. Had Mark written his gospel, as did Matthew, for Hebrew Christians, this explanation would have been unnecessary. *All the Jews*, except the Sadducees, who rejected the traditionary law. See N. on Matt. 3: 7. *Oft*. This is regarded by almost all critics, as a gloss, the MS. authorities being almost all in favor of

hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

4 And *when they come* from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables.

5 <sup>b</sup> Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not

<sup>b</sup> Mt. 15: 2.

a word signifying *the first*, on which, and also on the words *tradition of the elders*, see N. on Matt. 15: 2. *From the market*; literally, *from market*, according to our mode of expression. There is some word to be here supplied, which has given rise to two interpretations; 1. (having come) *from market they eat not except they wash*; 2. (of what is) *from market unless they wash (it) they eat not*. The former of these interpretations is to be preferred, as the ellipsis is less harsh and unnatural, and, as Alford observes, it would be no unusual practice to wash things bought in the market. The word *market* in this case, must have the sense *market-place*, *forum*, where men in ancient times assembled for the transaction of public business, or to pass a leisure hour in social intercourse with their friends. It is worthy of remark that the word *wash*, is literally *baptize*. No one will presume to say, that in this connection it signifies to immerse the whole body in water. So also in *washing* (literally, *baptism*) of cups, &c. in the next sentence, reference is had to the usual mode of applying water to the cleansing of vessels, and not to dipping them in water merely. *Many other things* pertaining to this same ritual purification. *Have received* (from the tradition of the elders) *to hold*, i. e. to observe. *Cups*. Drinking vessels. *Pots*. Small measures or vessels, for things both liquid and dry. The Roman *sextarius*, which corresponds to this, held about an English pint. These cups or pitchers were made of wood, stone, or horn render-

thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands ?

6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me.

7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups : and many other such like things ye do.

9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

10 For Moses said, <sup>d</sup> Honour thy father and thy mother ; and, ' Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death :

11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is*

<sup>e</sup> Is. 29 : 13 ; Mt. 15 : 8.  
<sup>d</sup> Ex. 20 : 12 ; De. 5 : 16 ; Mt. 15 : 4.

ed smooth by rubbing or scraping, from which the word in the original has its origin. *Brazen vessels.* These were used for cooking. Earthen vessels, when polluted, were at once broken (Levit. 15 : 12). *Tables.* These were the couches on which they reclined at meals. See N. on Matt. 23 : 6. The literal rendering is *baptism of tables*, which surely cannot be strained to signify *immersion of tables or couches.*

8. *Laying aside*, i. e. leaving undone, neglecting to do. *Commandment of God* is here opposed to *tradition of men.* The former they neglected, the latter they scrupulously observed. *As the washing*, &c. This shows in what the traditions of men consisted.

<sup>f</sup> Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me ; *he shall be free.*

12 And ye suffer him no more to do aught for his father or his mother ;

13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered : and many such like things do ye.

14 <sup>g</sup> And when he had called all the people *unto him*, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one *of you*, and understand :

15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him, can defile him : but the things which come out of him, these are they that defile the man.

16 <sup>h</sup> If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

17 <sup>i</sup> And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

18 And he saith unto them,

<sup>e</sup> Ex. 21 : 17 ; Le. 20 : 9 ; Ps. 20 : 20. <sup>f</sup> Mt. 15 : 5.  
<sup>g</sup> Mt. 15 : 10. <sup>h</sup> Mt. 11 : 15. <sup>i</sup> Mt. 15 : 15.

How infinitely were these below the commandments of God, to which they paid no regard. *Such like things* as the washings just mentioned.

9. *Full well.* Ironically spoken, as if he had said : ' you do well in thus rejecting God's commands, that you may keep your own tradition.' This is better than to regard it as an interrogation : do ye well in rejecting, &c. ?

10. *For Moses said* (Ex. 20 : 12). In Matthew : " For God commanded," &c. Moses received his laws from God, and hence his law was also God's law.

11, 12. *Corban.* A Hebrew word signifying *an offering, oblation, gift to God.* *He shall be free.* See N. on Matt. 15 : 6. *Ye suffer him*, &c. Ye do not permit him to use any of the



Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, *it* cannot defile him;

19 Because *it* entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

20 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

21 <sup>k</sup> For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

ℓ Ge. 6: 5, & 8: 21; Mt. 15: 19.

money thus consecrated to the temple service, for the support of his parents. *And many such like things, &c.* Repeated from v. 8.

17. *Into the house.* See N. on 2: 1. *Asked him.* Prof. Stuart says that the imperfect tense is here put for the aorist, but it is better to take it in an inceptive sense, *began to question him.*

19. *It entereth not into his heart.* It only affects the body. It does not reach the mind, and become an element of thought. The affections are not influenced thereby, nor the moral character changed. *Purging all meats.* The idea is, that food taken into the mouth and passing through the body, undergoes a sort of cleansing process, by which that which is pure and nutritious, being converted into chyle, remains in the system, while all the impurities are cast out. The participle *purging*, grammatically belongs to the word translated *draught*, in this sense: 'which circumstance (viz. that meats are cast forth from the body into the privy) makes them all pure, since nothing remains in the body but that which is absorbed into the system, and is, therefore, clean and lawful.' Nothing can exceed the clearness and force, with which our Lord refuted this miserable

22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness;

23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

24 ¶ 'And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know *it*: but he could not be hid.

25 For a *certain* woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet:

ℓ Mt. 15: 21.

notion of the Pharisees, respecting external or physical defilement.

24, 30. See Ns. on Matt. 15: 21-28.

24. *From thence*, i. e. the place of his last discourse, which is unspecified. Compare 6: 55, 56. *The borders.* This border land is supposed to be a tract dividing Palestine from Tyre and Sidon, which had been ceded by Solomon to the Tyrian king, and in after times was debatable ground, as to which of the countries it belonged. The word literally means *the between-boundaries, the parts forming a boundary between.* But the phrase, *borders of Tyre and Sidon*, would seem to indicate, that in the time of Christ, it was considered as belonging to Tyre and Sidon. *Entered* (literally, *having entered*) *into a house.* This is to be connected in thought with his wish to remain concealed, expressed in the following clause, to which it is subordinate.

25. *Heard of him*, i. e. of his being in that region. *Came and fell, &c.* It was not, however, until she had wearied the disciples with her importunities (Matthew), that she made her way into the presence of Jesus. The accounts of Matthew and Mark should be compared, in order to fully see this woman's faith and perseverance. See N. on Matt. 15: 23.

26 The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

27 But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* unto the dogs.

28 And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

29 And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

*m* Mt. 15 : 29. *n* Mt. 9 : 32; Lu. 11 : 14.

26. *Was a Greek, &c.* Some refer this, not to her country, but religion, as though it were said, she belonged to the Greek or heathen people. In Matt. 15 : 22 (on which see N.), she is called a *woman of Canaan*. The Phœnicians, inhabiting the northern part of ancient Canaan, called themselves by this name on their coins. *A Syrophenician*, i. e. a Phœnician of Syria, in contradistinction from the Lybo-Phœnicians or Phœnicians of Libya, viz. the Carthaginians.

27. *Let the children, &c.* Let the Jews, God's chosen people, first be fed, and then it is meet to give what remains to servants and strangers. It is implied, that the time for bestowing the blessings of the gospel upon the Gentiles had not yet come. Thus while the woman's faith was tested, a glorious promise was virtually made, that after the children had been fed, all who were in need, should become partakers in the blessings of salvation.

29. *For this saying*, i. e. this speech so full of faith, love, and humility.

30. *Laid upon the bed.* This was an evidence of her cure, as was the position of the demoniac, "sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind" (see 5 : 15), an evidence to

30 And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

31 ¶ <sup>m</sup> And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

32 And <sup>n</sup> they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

33 And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers

*o* Ch. 8 : 23; Jn. 9 : 6.

the Gadarenes of his wonderful cure. She had doubtless exhibited the same violence, which had previously rendered the demoniac of Gadara, an object of terror to all around him, but the paroxysm had now wholly ceased, and she lay in the enjoyment of quiet rest upon her bed.

31. *And again departing, &c.* See N. on Matt. 15 : 29.

32. *And they* (i. e. the friends of the diseased man) *bring unto him*. It appears from Matt. 15 : 30, that at this time great numbers of the sick and afflicted, were brought to him to be healed. *Had an impediment*. He was not wholly dumb, but a *stammerer*, as is the case with one who becomes deaf, after having learned to talk. They gradually lose their use of speech entirely, or speak with great difficulty. Some think from v. 35, that he was *tongue-tied*, but that is doubtless spoken figuratively. Alford says, "this miracle serves a most important purpose; that of clearly distinguishing between the cases of the *possessed*, and the *merely diseased and deformed*." *Put his hand, &c.* See N. on Matt. 9 : 18.

33. *He took him aside*, probably for the same reason, that he put the people out, when he healed the ruler's daughter.

into his ears, and ° he spit, and touched his tongue ;

34 And <sup>r</sup> looking up to heaven, ° he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

35 <sup>r</sup> And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

36 And <sup>a</sup> he charged them that

*p* Jn. 11 : 41, & 17 : 1. *q* Jn. 11 : 33, 38.

ter (see N. on Matt. 9 : 25). Trench finds the reason in the man himself, who, in comparative solitude and silence, might be more recipient of deep and lasting impressions. His disciples were doubtless with him, when the miracle was performed, but the multitude so crowded upon him, that he chose not to perform the cure in their presence. *Put his fingers, &c.* Our Lord's miracles were usually accompanied by some external manifestation. It was done in this case, to give the man palpable evidence, that his cure was wrought by Jesus. He *spit* on his finger, and with that *touched his tongue*.

34. *Looking up to heaven*, in prayer and communion with his Father. See John 11 : 41 ; 17 : 1. *He sighed* (literally *groaned*) in view of the calamity with which this man had been visited, or he may have taken, in this moment of communion with his Father, such a vivid and enlarged view of human suffering, physical and spiritual, that it drew from him a groan of sympathy and commiseration. *Ephphatha*. An Aramæan word in the imperative, signifying, *be opened*, referring especially to his deafness, although virtually addressed to his tongue, in the sense, *be loosed*. This word is used in Isa. 35 : 5, in the prediction, spiritually considered, of this very blessing of the Messianic reign.

35. *The string of his tongue, &c.* Spoken metaphorically. His impediment of speech, from whatever source it arose, was now removed. *He spake plain* ; literally, *rightly, distinctly*. This

they should tell no man : but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published *it* ;

37 And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well : he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

*r* Is. 35 : 5, 6 ; Mt. 11 : 5. *s* Ch. 5 : 43.

seems to evince not entire dumbness, but only indistinctness of utterance.

36. *He charged them* (i. e. the man and his friends who stood by) *that they should tell no man*, i. e. should not blazon it abroad, so as to provoke the jealousy of his enemies. *But the more, &c.* His modesty and freedom from ostentation, in wishing no publicity to be given to his extraordinary works, furnished an additional incitement to noising them abroad. In the original a double comparative is employed for the sake of emphasis, which our translators have rendered, *so much the more a great deal*.

37. *Beyond measure*. This word is also highly emphatic, and shows how deeply the minds of the people were affected with his wonderful works. *He hath done, &c.* He has performed a most remarkable cure. The man is thoroughly restored to the sense of hearing and power of speech. There can be no improvement on this miracle. Such seems to be the simple and natural sense of this passage, which some expositors have strained to signify the same as Gen. 1 : 31, supposing the people to compare this work with the first creation, which God himself pronounced to be very good. Such a comparison might be made by those, who, in the light of the gospel, have attained to higher and clearer views of the nature of Christ, but would scarcely comport with the ideas entertained of him by the multitudes in his day, whose notions of the Messiah were so confused and erroneous.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**I**N those days <sup>a</sup>the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and saith unto them,

2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat :

3 And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.

4 And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these *men* with bread here in the wilderness?

5 <sup>b</sup> And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

6 And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave

<sup>a</sup> Mt. 15: 32. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 15: 34; see Ch. 6: 38.

## CHAP. VIII.

1-9. See Ns. on Matt. 15: 32-38. The accounts of the two Evangelists agree almost verbatim.

3. *Divers of them*; literally, *some of them*. *From far*, and could not reach home, if at all, without great suffering.

5. *And they said, Seven*. Matthew adds, "and a few little fishes," which Mark inserts in v. 7. These he is there said to have blessed, which does not imply the double performance of this service, once over the bread (v. 6), and again over the fishes (v. 7). But as Mark introduces the notice of the fishes out of its proper place, he repeats the words *he blessed*, to show that the fishes also were included in the act of blessing spoken of in v. 6.

9. *About four thousand*. Neither here nor in the feeding of the five

to his disciples to set before *them*; and they did set *them* before the people.

7 And they had a few small fishes: and <sup>c</sup>he blessed, and commanded to set them also before *them*.

8 So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets.

9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

10 ¶ And <sup>d</sup>straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

11 <sup>e</sup>And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.

12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign?

<sup>c</sup> Mat. 14: 19; Ch. 6: 41. <sup>d</sup> Mat. 15: 39.  
<sup>e</sup> Mat. 12: 38; Jn. 6: 30.

thousand (6: 44), does Mark include the women and children. See Matt. 15: 38.

10. *Dalmanutha*. See N. on Matt. 15: 39.

11-13. See Ns. on Matt. 16: 1-4. *Sighed deeply* (v. 12). As we say, *fetching a deep sigh*. *In his spirit*. Bloomfield: "*from his very heart*." *Spirit* is here taken as the seat of the emotions, passions, affections, and not, as some think, of the higher spiritual nature of Jesus. *Why doth this generation*, &c. The question denotes surprise, that amidst so many proofs of his Messiahship (Matt. 16: 3), they should still be requiring a further sign. *There shall no sign be given*; literally, *if there shall be any sign given*, a Hebraistic form of imprecation, the words, "may I not live," or some such preceding phrase, being omitted, but well under-



verily, I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

13 And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

14 ¶ Now *the disciples* had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

15 <sup>9</sup> And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* <sup>4</sup> because we have no bread.

17 And when Jesus knew *it*, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? <sup>1</sup> per-

*f* Mat. 16 : 5. *g* Mat. 16 : 6. *h* Mat. 16 : 7.  
*i* Ch. 6 : 52.

stood in conversation. *There shall be no sign*, such as they seek after. This harmonizes Mark with Matthew, who adds, "but the sign of the prophet Jonas."

13. *To the other side*, i. e. to the northern Betsaida, or Betsaida-Julias.

14-21. See Ns. on Matt. 16 : 5-12.

15. *Beware of*; literally, *look away from*, a varied expression of *have yourselves away from*, in the parallel passage of Matthew 16 : 6. See Matt. 24 : 4. *The leaven of Herod*. This is not to be understood of doctrine so much as the irreligion, impiety, sensuality, and corrupt practices of those who belonged to the court of Herod, and were aspiring to his favor. Some, however, from the parallel passage in Matthew, refer it to the leaven of the Sadducees, since Herod and his followers belonged to that sect. But this is unnatural and far-fetched.

17. *Why reason ye, &c.* The surprise of our Lord at their dullness of comprehension, is more full and emphatic in Mark, than in the parallel passage of Matthew. *Because ye have*

*ceive ye not yet*, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

18 Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

19 <sup>4</sup> When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.

20 And <sup>1</sup> when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.

21 And he said unto them, How is it that <sup>m</sup> ye do not understand?

22 ¶ And he cometh to Betsaida; and they bring a blind *z* Mat. 14 : 20; Jn. 6 : 13. *l* Mat. 15 : 37; ver. 8.  
*m* Ch. 6 : 52; ver. 17.

*no bread?* As though that were the reason, why you should beware of the Pharisaic leaven? *Perceive ye not?* This refers to moral or mental perception. The following word *understand*, literally signifies *to bring together in the mind, to comprehend, understand*, and is an advance on the idea of the preceding verb. *Hardened*. See N. on 6 : 52.

18. *Having eyes, &c.* This refers to the great miracles mentioned in vs. 19-21, which were so palpable to their senses, especially to their sight. *Do ye not remember?* Had they borne these great miracles in mind, they would have felt little concern about the supply of their physical wants, while in the company of a person clothed with such extraordinary power. Nor would they have supposed, that he would dwell on things of such comparative unimportance, as the food which perisheth (John 6 : 27).

22. The healing of the blind man of Betsaida is found only in Mark. *He cometh, &c.* See N. on v. 13. It was on the passage across the lake to this town, or just as they landed on the

man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands up-

n Ch. 7:33.

shore, that the preceding conversation (vs. 14-21) took place. *They bring a blind man, &c.* This must have been done shortly after he entered the town, as he evidently did not tarry long in the place. *To touch him*, i. e. to lay his hands upon him, according to his usual custom, when performing a miraculous cure. See N. on Matt. 8:3.

23. *Led him out of the town.* Various are the conjectures why this was done. Two only are worthy of mention. The first is that which refers it to some unworthiness of the place, that a work of this sort should be done in it. This finds confirmation in v. 26, where the man is commanded, "neither to go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town." The second refers it to his desire to give no occasion to his enemies, who were now becoming watchful and rancorous, by the collection of such a crowd, as the public performance of this miracle would have brought together. It was to avoid the machinations of his enemies, and allay the rising jealousy of the civil authorities, that he was now on his way to the distant town of Cæsarea Philippi. *When he had spit, &c.* The healing of this blind man had the remarkable feature of being, as it were, a double miracle, the first application restoring him only partially to sight. The reason for this is not given, but we may assume, that it was to show the full and absolute power of our Lord, which did not restrict itself to any mode of operation. The conjecture of Dr. Burton—that the first miracle opened his eyes, but he not knowing one object from another, having never before seen them, a second miracle was required to open his *mind* also, so that he could comprehend what he saw—is fanciful and un-

on him, he asked him if he saw aught.

24 And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees walking.

25 After that, he put *his* hands again upon his eyes, and made

tenable. The application of spittle was in both instances to his eyes, and if the effect in the one instance was physical, it must have been so in the other. Besides it assumes that the man was born blind, but that he was not, is evident from his knowing how trees looked (v. 24), and if he had been born in this condition, he did not on that account require a double healing, any more than the man blind from his birth in John 9:1. Trench quotes Chrysostom and others, as finding the reason of this progressive or double miracle, in the imperfection of this blind man's faith, who, instead of coming to Jesus, and crying for aid, as others in like circumstances did, was brought to him by others, himself perhaps scarcely expecting a benefit. Our Lord graciously gives him a foretaste of the full and complete blessing of sight, in order to awaken and call forth that faith, of which in the outset he had almost been wholly destitute.

24. *I see men as trees, &c.* The order is: *I see men walking as (it were) trees.* This knowledge of the appearance of trees shows that he was not born blind, but had become so from disease. His vision, on the first laying on of Christ's hands, was yet so indistinct, that he could only distinguish men from trees, by their height and motion.

25. *Made him look up*, i. e. directed him to raise his eyes, and look forth upon surrounding objects. *He was restored fully to sight. Clearly*; literally, *radiantly, conspicuously*, i. e. objects far and near were seen in all their distinctness of outline and color. Evangelical commentators have generally remarked on the analogy between this recovery of the blind man of Bethsaida, and the process by which a sin-

him look up; and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.

27 ¶<sup>p</sup> And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Cæsarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?

28 And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets.

29 And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.

30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

31 And he began to teach

o Mt. 8: 4; Ch. 5: 43. p Mt. 16: 13; Lu. 9: 18.  
q Mt. 14: 2. r Mt. 16: 6; Jn. 6: 69, & 11: 27.

ner is usually brought out of nature's darkness into God's marvellous light. The introduction of spiritual light into the soul is generally gradual. The great truths of religion at first appear dim and indistinct. But the power of spiritual discernment becomes stronger, as the soul receives repeated accessions of grace, until it enjoys, in full degree, the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4: 6).

26. *Neither go into the town, &c.* The question arises in some minds, how he could tell it to any one in the town, if he did not enter into it, according to the first clause of the command. But this difficulty arises from overlooking the Greek idiom, which answers here to the idea, *go not into the town and tell it to any there.* The word town is repeated for the sake of emphasis.

27-30. See Ns. on Matt. 16: 13-20, and Luke 9: 18-21. The account of Peter's profession of faith is related with but little variation by the Evan-

them, that the Son of man must suffer many things and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

33 But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

34 ¶ And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

35 For whosoever will save

s Mt. 16: 20. t Mt. 16: 21; Lu. 9: 22.  
u Mt. 10: 38. x Jn. 12: 25.

gelists. Luke prefaces it by stating, that it took place when our Lord was alone with his disciples praying; and Mark and Luke both omit the praise bestowed upon Peter in Matthew (vs. 17-19). *Towns of Cæsarea Philippi* (v. 27), i. e. the villages lying around or dependent upon it.

31-38. See Ns. on Matt. 16: 21-27; Luke 9: 22-26.

32, 33. *He spake that saying* (see v. 31) *openly*, i. e. without reserve or ambiguity. He may have hinted it to them before, but now he announces it in plain language. *But when he had turned, &c.* In the original, *but having turned and looked on his disciples.* Perhaps he saw that they entertained the same sentiments as Peter, and by this act included them in his rebuke.

34, 35. *And when he had called, &c.* There is no contradiction between Mark's account, and that of Matthew and Luke, in which Jesus is said to have addressed these words to his dis-

his life, shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

38 <sup>y</sup> Whosoever therefore <sup>z</sup> shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

<sup>y</sup> Mt. 10: 33. <sup>z</sup> See Ro. 1: 16; 2 Ti. 1: 8.  
<sup>a</sup> Mt. 16: 28.

cles. In every place the common people, in greater or less numbers, gathered around him, and these as well as his disciples he now called to him, to hear the important truth which he was about to announce to them. *For my sake and the gospel's.* No difference in sense is to be sought in these terms, which are only combined to give emphasis to the idea, that the cause of Christ and his gospel are one and the same.

38. *Whosoever therefore, &c.* The lowly condition and sufferings of Jesus were now fully disclosed. If his followers should yield to a feeling of shame, at his rejection by the great and honorable of earth, and should fear to profess their attachment to him, of them would he also be ashamed in the day of his power and exaltation. *My words*, i. e. doctrine, gospel. *Adulterous*, i. e. faithless, apostate from God. No special reference is made here to the sin of adultery, as being prevalent to an unusual degree at that time, but the word is used figuratively, to designate those who have forsaken God and his true worship, as the adulteress forsakes her husband. In the Old Testament prophets, this was a very common mode of expressing the sin of idolatry,

## CHAPTER IX.

AND he said unto them, <sup>a</sup> Verily, I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here which shall not taste of death, till they have seen <sup>b</sup> the kingdom of God come with power.

2 ¶ <sup>c</sup> And after six days, Jesus taketh *with him* Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.

3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding <sup>d</sup> white as snow; so

<sup>b</sup> Mt. 24: 30. <sup>c</sup> Mt. 17: 1; Lu. 9: 28.  
<sup>d</sup> Da. 7: 9; Mt. 28: 3.

into which God's chosen people had fallen. *In the glory, &c.* This refers to the day of judgment, when our Lord will appear in divine glory, the same as that which belongs to the Father. In Luke, his glory at his coming is said to be threefold, *his own, the Father's, and the holy angels'*, a very comprehensive expression to denote that there is no glory in the universe, which shall not encircle and irradiate him, as he comes to sit upon the throne of final judgment. *With the holy angels.* See N. on Matt. 25: 31.

## CHAPTER IX.

1. See N. on Matt. 16: 28; Luke 9: 27. *The kingdom of God, &c.* In Matthew, "the Son of man coming in his kingdom." *The kingdom of God* is the Messianic reign, and hence these are but varied expressions for the same thing.

2-13. See Ns. on Matt. 17: 1-13; Luke 9: 28-36. In this account of the Transfiguration, Matthew and Mark agree closely, but are less full than Luke.

3. *Shining; literally, glittering, of dazzling whiteness. Fuller.* Anciently the fuller not only dressed new cloth, but washed and scoured that which was soiled.



as no fuller on earth can white them.

4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

5 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

6 For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

7 And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

8 And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

*e* Mt. 17: 9. *f* Mal. 4: 5; Mt. 17: 10.  
*g* Ps. 22: 6; Is. 53: 2, &c.; Da. 9: 26.

4. *Elias, with Moses.* In Matthew and Luke, "Moses and Elias." *They were talking with Jesus.* It appears from this as well as from Matthew and Luke, that when first seen by the disciples, they were conversing with Jesus. How or when they came was not seen, or at least has not been reported to us. The subject of their conversation is given in Luke 9: 31.

6. *Sore afraid;* literally, *frightened out of their senses, beside themselves through fear.* This shows the overpowering splendor of the scene. *This is my beloved Son.* Matthew adds, "in whom I am well pleased," words spoken, when this voice from heaven was first heard at the baptism of Jesus.

10. *Kept that saying,* i. e. kept it secret. *Rising from the dead* is not here the resurrection in a general sense, for in that the Jews (with the exception of the Sadducees) believed. The apostles well understood it as referring to Christ's resurrection, connected with his death just foretold. That the Mes-

9 'And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

10 And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

11 ¶ And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?

12 And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and <sup>9</sup> how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and <sup>h</sup> be set at nought.

13 But I say unto you, That <sup>i</sup> Elias is indeed come, and they

*h* Lu. 23: 11; Phi. 2: 7. *i* Mt. 11: 14.

siah should be slain, and then arise from the dead, was to them wholly inexplicable. They did not understand it until after his resurrection, and hence when he died on the cross, all their hopes died with him.

11, 12. *Why say, &c.* The original is, *that say the scribes,* where must be supplied the ellipsis, found not unfrequently in such indirect questions: (why is it) *that the scribes say, &c. Elias verily cometh first.* Our Lord replies by affirming the truth of what the scribes taught, and then proposes in his turn a question: *And how is it (also) written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things and be set at nought?* By taking these words as an interrogation, which in the original is admissible, the way is prepared for the conclusion in v. 13, that Elias has indeed come and suffered, as was prophesied of him; and in like manner also will prophecy be fulfilled, as to the sufferings and death of the Son of man. Thus the parts of our Lord's reply are

have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

14 ¶ <sup>k</sup> And when he came to *his* disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

15 And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to *him* saluted him.

16 And he asked the scribes,

<sup>k</sup> Mt. 17 : 14.

What question ye with them?

17 And <sup>l</sup> one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him; and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

<sup>l</sup> Mt. 17 : 14; Lu. 9 : 38.

made to cohere and correspond. *Set at nought*, i. e. made nothing of, despised.

14-29. See Ns. on Matt. 17 : 14-21; Luke 9 : 37-43. Mark is much fuller in his account of the healing of this demoniac, than either Matthew or Luke.

14. *Questioning with them.* Puzzling them with sophistical arguments and captious questions respecting the Messiahship of Jesus. They were also, doubtless, boasting over the failure of the disciples to cure the demoniac, and arguing from that, the inability of their Master to do this. Stier remarks, that "hardly such another contrast can be found in the gospel as this, between the open heaven and sons of glory on the mount, and the valley of tears, with its terrible forms of misery, pain, and unbelief."

15. *Were greatly amazed.* This word implies admiration, as well as awe and veneration. Trench and others think that our Lord's countenance retained traces of his glory on the mount (Ex. 34 : 29, 30), otherwise so strong a term would not have been used to express their surprise at his sudden approach. However this may be, there was doubtless a dignity of manner, and a calm and heavenly expression of countenance, that inspired them with involuntary awe and admiration. *Running to him*, i. e. running to meet him.

17. *One of the multitude*, &c. The question had been addressed to the scribes, but they either were too con-

founded at his appearance to reply, or the agony of the father prevented them. See N. on Matt. 17 : 14. *I have brought* (literally, *I brought*) *unto thee.* He expresses his intention, not being aware of Jesus' absence. *A dumb spirit*, i. e. one causing dumbness, or obstinate silence. It appears also that the demoniac was subject to fits of epilepsy, and from v. 25, that he was deaf also.

18. *He taketh him*, or more literally, *seizeth him*, the idea of a fierce and sudden attack lying in the original verb. Some refer this to the disease, and render, "it attacketh him," but the subject of the verb is evidently to be understood from the antecedent, of the demon in the sense of, *wherever he seizeth or taketh possession of him.* *He teareth*; literally, *breaks him to pieces, shivers, or shatters him.* The word is sometimes used of a wrestler, who dashes his antagonist violently to the ground. *To tear down or fling to the ground*, is doubtless the meaning here (see Luke 9 : 42). *He foameth* (i. e. froths at the mouth). The subject here changes from the demon to the man possessed. *Gnasheth with his teeth*, i. e. grinds or grates them together, as one in great rage or distress. *Pineth away*, wastes away through these violent attacks of the demon. *I spake*, &c. Finding Jesus absent, the father applied for relief to his disciples.

20. *And when he saw*, &c. At sight of Jesus, the demon was aroused to the

19 He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me.

20 And they brought him unto him: and <sup>m</sup> when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

*m* Ch. 1: 26; Lu. 9: 42.

most violent and malignant efforts to destroy his victim. *He fell on the ground*, thrown down by the demon. See N. on v. 18. *Wallowed*, i. e. rolled about on the ground.

21. *He asked his father*. Jesus deferred the cure for a moment, in order by these inquiries to make trial of the father's faith. *Of a child*, i. e. since his childhood. It was a long standing, as well as obstinate possession.

22. *Ofttimes it hath cast, &c.* This shows that the demon was one of the most malignant kind. *Into the fire*; literally, *into fire*, i. e. not merely fire on the hearth, as might be understood had the article been used, but fire, wherever it might be found. In the same general sense *water* is to be taken. *If thou canst, &c.* This does not imply entire absence of faith, but its existence in so small a degree, that it almost disappeared in the greatness of his trial. But Jesus saw that it was there, and the smoking flax he did not quench, and the bruised reed he did not break. He kindly reassured him, and inspired him with such an increase of faith, that the miracle was no longer delayed. *On us*. Like the Syrophœnician woman (Matt. 15: 25), the father regarded his son's wretched condition as his own.

23. *Jesus said unto him*. As this passage is now edited by the best critics of the present day, the translation

22 And ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

23 Jesus said unto him, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he

would be: *Jesus said unto him this* (saying), *if thou canst believe, &c.* Or, Jesus gave in reply, his well known answer: *If thou canst believe, &c.* making it a saying, which he had uttered on similar occasions. The words *if thou canst believe*, are evidently antithetic to the words of the father, *if thou canst do anything*, and make the miracle depend, not on the challenge of power in our Lord, but of faith in the father. Christ will not have his power to heal either physical or spiritual maladies, questioned. *All things are possible, &c.* These words of encouragement are added, to call forth and strengthen the feeble faith of the father. Our Lord's reply may be seen in this paraphrase: *If thou canst believe thy son will be cured for, all things are possible, &c.*

24. *Cried out*. Made an open declaration of his faith. The presence of cavilling scribes did not deter him, from an open utterance of his belief in Christ's power to heal his son. *With tears*, those of a penitent, confiding heart. *Help thou mine unbelief*. Pardon the weakness of my faith, supply its deficiency, and give it the power requisite to secure the healing of my son. "Nothing can be more touching and living, than this whole most masterly and wonderful narration." Alford.

25. *Came running together* (towards him), as was natural, when such a mi-

rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.*

26 And *the spirit* cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; in-somuch that many said, He is dead.

27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

28 ° And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

29 And he said unto them,

o Mt. 17 : 19. p Mat. 17 : 22; Lu. 9 : 44.

racle was about to be performed. Some think that this conversation took place, when the people met Jesus (v. 15), and the crowd were yet at a distance. But it is said that *all* the people ran to meet him; and that the scribes had also joined them, is evident from v. 16. The running together then, in this verse, must refer to their crowding around him in order to witness the miracle. *I charge thee, &c.* This command addressed to the evil spirit, is very full and explicit. It gives emphasis to our Lord's power, as compared with the want of power in the disciples to cast out the demon. The words, *and enter no more into him*, are used by our Lord in no other similar instance. The whole narration shows the malignant tenacity, with which the demon retained possession of the child.

26. *The spirit cried, &c.* It was a cry of rage, uttered through the organs of the man. *Rent him sore*, i. e. threw him into violent spasms or convulsions. These words would be more expressive, if literally rendered, *having cried out and rent him sore*, (the spirit) *came forth. As one dead.* The demon, which had filled him with such terrible agony, having left him, he sank down exhausted and apparently without life.

VOL. I.—20\*

This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

30 ¶ And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know *it*.

31 <sup>p</sup> For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.

32 But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

33 ¶ <sup>q</sup> And he came to Capernaum.

q Mat. 18 : 1; Lu. 9 : 46.

27. *But Jesus took him, &c.* See Matt. 17 : 6, 8; Rev. 1 : 17; Dan. 10 : 9, 10.

29. *This kind can come forth* (i. e. can be expelled,) &c. See N. on Matt. 17 : 21.

30-32. See Ns. on Matt. 17 : 22, 23; Luke 9 : 43-45. *He would not that any man* (v. 30), &c. He wished to travel in a private way, in order to avoid the jealousy of the rulers. It appears also from (v. 31), that he desired opportunity to instruct his disciples more fully, in the great fact of his approaching death and resurrection.

32. *They understood not, &c.* They could not reconcile these predicted sufferings of Christ, with the prophecies, which spoke of him as a conquering Messiah, reigning triumphant over all his enemies. *Were afraid to ask him.* There was a solemnity and dignity of manner which awed them, so that they dared not question him on so mysterious a subject.

33-50. See Ns. on Matt. 18 : 1-9; Luke 9 : 46-50. Mark's account of this discourse, respecting the greatest among them, is much the fullest.

33-35. *In the house.* See Matt. 17 : 25. *By the way*, i. e. on their way to Capernaum. *They held their peace,*



naum : and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way ?

34 But they held their peace : for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who *should be* the greatest.

35 And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, ' If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and servant of all.

36 And ' he took a child, and set him in the midst of them : and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,

37 Whosoever shall receive one

*v* Mat. 20 : 26, 27. *s* Mat. 18 : 2 ; Ch. 10 : 16.  
*t* Mat. 10 : 40 ; Lu. 9 : 48.

through shame at the subject of dispute. This appears from the following clause, which denotes the reason of their silence. *He sat down.* He took the usual sitting posture of a teacher. *Called the twelve* around him, to hear his discourse. *To be first* in dignity and office ; to hold the highest rank in the Messianic kingdom. *Last of all.* Explained in the next clause, *servant of all.* His rank would be lowest of the whole, and his relative position, the very reverse of that which he was seeking to obtain. It appears from v. 34, where *who should be the greatest*, may be translated *who was the greatest*, that the disciples were disputing about their present relative rank, which they thought would remain the same, when the kingdom of God should be fully set up. But if this was so, the dispute would yet be virtually, as Luke has it, *who should be the greatest.*

36, 37. *Had taken him*, &c. Perhaps nothing more is meant than *had embraced him*, as the child must have been some ten years of age. *Whosoever shall receive*, i. e. admit and welcome, as a guest, in the name of and for the sake of Jesus. *Receiveth not me* (only), *but him that sent me.* The service rendered

of such children in my name, receiveth me : and ' whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

38 " And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us ; and we forbade him, because he followeth not us.

39 But Jesus said, Forbid him not : ' for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.

40 For ' he that is not against us is on our part.

*u* Nu. 11 : 28 ; Lu. 9 : 49. *x* 1 Co. 12 : 3.  
*y* See Mt. 12 : 30.

to the lowest and humblest of our race, if done with proper motive, is virtually rendered to the supreme Lord of the universe, and as such shall be rewarded with life everlasting. See Matt. 25 : 35, 36.

38. This verse has an intimate connexion with what our Savior had just spoken. It is as if John had said : Was it then right for us to forbid one to cast out devils in the authority and use of thy name, when the receiving of even a little child in thy name, is the same as receiving thee ? *Followeth not us*, i. e. is not one of thy immediate disciples. *Because he followeth not us*, So at the present day, are found those who deny the right to perform the functions of the ministerial office to all, who have not received it by virtue of the so-called apostolic succession.

39. *For there is no man*, &c. The sentiment is, that no one who performs a miracle in the name of Jesus, will ever speak or act against him. The very success of the miracle, if it did not show him to be already a believer in Christ, would awe him into a frame of mind, which would prevent him from readily speaking (*can lightly speak*) evil of Christ.

40. *He that is not*, &c. This makes

41 <sup>a</sup> For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

42 <sup>a</sup> And whosoever shall offend one of *these* little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

43 <sup>b</sup> And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

44 <sup>c</sup> Where their worm dieth

<sup>z</sup> Mat. 10 : 42. <sup>a</sup> Mat. 18 : 6 ; Lu. 17 : 1.

the foregoing truth of general application. The reference is to outward conformity, and does not conflict with Matt. 12 : 30, where inward unity of purpose and co-operation is spoken of (Alford). Those who labor for Christ, although belonging to another external organization or ecclesiastical connection, are to be regarded as friends and brethren, and not forbidden to do any good which is within their power. Our Lord uses the word *us*, because he includes his disciples as belonging to him (see v. 41), and being one with him.

41. This verse has generally been referred back to v. 37, but it is better to regard it as a continuation of v. 40. The idea is, that if so small a service, as is here referred to, goes not unrewarded, much more will the ejection of a demon in his name be approved and rewarded of him. *In my name*, (i. e.) *because ye belong to Christ*, and are his ministers. The latter member explains the former. *Belong to Christ* is a phrase not found elsewhere in the gospel, but is used in Rom. 8 : 9 ; 1 Cor. 1 : 12 ; 3 : 4.

42. See N. on Matt. 18 : 6.

43. *And if thy hand*, &c. See N. on Matt. 5 : 29, 30, of which this passage is a solemn and emphatic repeti-

tion. *Into the fire*, &c. See N. on

45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched :

46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire :

48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

49 For every one shall be salted

<sup>b</sup> De. 18 : 6 ; Mat. 5 : 29. <sup>c</sup> Is. 66 : 24.

tion. *Into the fire*, &c. See N. on Matt. 3 : 12. These words are added to show that the preceding *gehenna*, *hell*, is not the literal valley of Hinnom (see N. on Matt. 5 : 22), but the place of future and endless punishment.

44. *Where their worm*, &c. Further evidence is here furnished, that the literal *gehenna* is not here referred to, but a place of punishment, where an undying worm shall feed upon the wicked, and unquenchable fire shall consume them. The imagery of the worm and fire, is drawn from carcasses thrown into the valley of Hinnom, upon which worms feed, when not consumed at once with fire. The words are a quotation from Isa. 66 : 24, and are thrice repeated by our Lord, as a solemn and emphatic declaration of the awful doom of God's enemies. There is no necessity of supposing a literal worm or literal fire, in the spiritual *Gehenna*. Indeed there are insuperable objections to that view. But there will be the gnawings of remorse, the stings of a guilty conscience, the fire of God's wrath, more terrible than it is possible for any imagery, drawn from sources of physical suffering, to fully set forth.

49. *For every one shall be salted with*

with <sup>f</sup> fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

50 'Salt is good: but if the

d Le. 2 : 13; Ez. 43 : 24. e Mat. 5 : 13.

*fire.* This verse has furnished much trouble to commentators, mainly from their referring it, as most do, to the punishment of the wicked in the world to come. This has resulted from the use of the word fire, which has just been three times repeated, as an element of the sufferings of the lost. But it is evident that the words *every one* (literally, *all*), refer to the class of persons represented by *thee* in the preceding context, that is, to the disciples, and also to believers in every age. The verse then contains the reason, why God's children are to reach heaven by such a self-denying and trying process, as (if we keep up the figure) causes them to enter life maimed, and halt, and having but one eye. It was in accordance with the divine plan, that they were to be tested and purified by these fiery trials. The context requires, therefore, from this highly figurative passage, a sense applicable only to believers. This the words readily yield. *Every one* (i. e. every believer) *shall be salted* (i. e. seasoned and rendered meet for everlasting life) *with fire*, i. e. by such trials, sufferings, and self-denials, as cleanse and purify the soul, like metals purged of base alloy by fire. This sense, which is drawn fairly from the words, and answers the demand of the context, is undoubtedly the true one. Alford refers *every one*, to all men both good and bad. To the former, God is a *purifying*, to the latter, a *consuming* fire. This is in itself true, but the passage seems to refer to a testing or purifying, and not to a destroying process. *And every sacrifice*, &c. Those who regard this as a co-ordinate, independent sentence, explain it thus: *and every sacrifice* (i. e. every one who consecrates himself a living sacrifice to God. Rom. 12 : 1) *shall be salted with salt*, i. e. with the salt of heavenly wisdom. But the discourse here is not upon the bestowal of wisdom, or spiritual illumina-

salt have lost its saltness, where-with will ye season it? <sup>f</sup> Have

<sup>f</sup> Ep. 4 : 29; Col. 4 : 6.

tion, but upon the trials and self-renunciation, by which every thing impure and earthly was to be, as it were, burnt out of the Christian, previously to his entering into the life spoken of in the preceding verses. It is better therefore to make this sentence subordinate to the preceding, by giving to the conjunction *and*, the sense of *as* or *just as*, a sense which, in the original, it often has. The meaning would then be, *just as every sacrifice shall be* (i. e. is to be) *salted with salt* (Levit. 2 : 13), an emblem of incorruption, and of the perpetuity of God's covenant with believers. The sense of the whole passage then is: every believer shall be salted with fire (and thus thoroughly tried and purified), just as every sacrifice is to be salted, before it can be offered acceptably to God.

50. *Salt is good*, i. e. when properly applied to fit substances, it is one of the most useful and preserving agencies of nature. *But if the salt have lost*, &c. See N. on Matt. 5 : 13. Some think that salt is here employed, in the figurative sense of the *salt of wisdom*, others, the *salt of friendship*, but neither of these views accords with the demand of the context. This fiery salting, this burning, purifying process, is of no avail, when there is no grace in the soul, to which it is applied. The salt, in this case, has virtually lost its savor. It has no purifying, preserving influence. The fire will consume, but not cleanse and save. *Wherewith will ye season it?* How will it recover its properties, thus rendered worthless by the unsuitable state of the subject to which it is applied? How will the purifying fires take effect in the soul, void of grace, and in a state of spiritual corruption? The salt is powerless, and will remain so, until the grace of God change and renew the heart. This sense is demanded by the train of thought, which is here remarkably close and logical,

salt in yourselves, and <sup>g</sup> have peace one with one another.

## CHAPTER X.

AND <sup>a</sup> he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judea by the farther side of Jordan : and the people resort unto him again ; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.

2 ¶ <sup>b</sup> And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife ? tempting him.

3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you ?

4 And they said, <sup>c</sup> Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away.

5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of *g* Ro. 12 : 18 ; 2 Co. 13 : 11 ; He. 12 : 14. *a* Mat. 19 : 1. *b* Mat. 19 : 3. *c* De. 24 : 1 ; Mat. 5 : 31.

besides being highly figurative and concise. *Have salt in yourselves.* See to it, that you have this renewing, sanctifying grace, which will render efficacious this salting with fire, by which you are to be tested and purified. *And have peace, &c.* This is said in reference to the dispute as to preëminence, which gave rise to the discourse.

## CHAPTER X.

1. See Ns. on Matt. 19 : 1, 2.

2-12. See Ns. on Matt. 19 : 3-12. In this discussion of the subject of divorce, the Evangelists strictly harmonize, although there is such diversity of arrangement, as to show that they are independent writers.

3. *What did Moses command you ?* His adversaries expected a direct reply to their question, and that some ground of accusation would be furnished thereby. But he refers them to what Moses had said on the subject, and thus takes occasion to expose their erroneous notions respecting the law of divorce.

your heart he wrote you this precept :

6 But from the beginning of the creation <sup>d</sup> God made them male and female.

7 <sup>e</sup> For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife ;

8 And they twain shall be one flesh : so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

9 What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter.

11 And he saith unto them, <sup>f</sup> Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

12 And if a woman shall put *d* Ge. 1 : 27. *e* Ge. 2 : 24 ; 1 Co. 6 : 16 ; Ep. 5 : 31. *f* Mat. 5 : 32 ; Ro. 7 : 3 ; 1 Co. 7 : 10, 11.

4, 5. *Moses suffered, &c.* See Dent. 24 : 1. *And Jesus answered, &c.* According to Matthew (v. 7), they inquired why Moses gave this command respecting the bill of divorcement. This question is therefore to be mentally supplied in Mark, to preserve the train of thought.

10-12. These words in Matthew are addressed to the Pharisees. It is not improbable, that they were repeated to the disciples in the house, in order to render so important a subject clear and emphatic. *In the house*, which he occupied as his private lodging. *Whosoever shall put away, &c.* Supply from Matthew, "except it be for fornication." *Against her*, i. e. to the injury of the wife thus repudiated. Some refer it to the newly married wife, in the sense of, *in his connection with her.* This is less natural and apposite. *And if a woman, &c.* As the woman had no right, under the Mosaic law, to divorce her husband, this precept must be considered, as spoken by way of anticipa-



away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

13 ¶ <sup>g</sup> And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and *his* disciples rebuked those that brought *them*.

14 But when Jesus saw *it*, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for <sup>h</sup> of such is the kingdom of God.

15 Verily I say unto you, <sup>i</sup> Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

16 And he took them up in his arms, put *his* hands upon them, and blessed them.

<sup>g</sup> Mat. 19: 13; Lu. 18: 15. <sup>h</sup> 1 Co. 14: 20;  
<sup>i</sup> 1 Pe. 2: 2.

tion of those times and countries, in which the woman would possess this right. The words *shall put away her husband*, mean, however, nothing more in Jewish usage, than desertion, the language being shaped to preserve the antithesis between the clauses. It should be noticed, that this verse corresponds to the latter clause of v. 9 in Matthew, the expression being varied in form, but not in sense.

13-16. See Ns. on Matt. 19: 13-15: Luke 18: 15-17.

14. *Was much displeased* with the disciples. It was a case of improper interference on their part, and hindered him from giving expression to his affection for little children. For the reasons which influenced the disciples in doing this, see N. on Matthew 19: 13. *Unto them*, i. e. his disciples.

15, 16. *As a little child*, i. e. with childlike trust, humility, sincerity, and love. *Took them up*, &c. They were little children (Matt. v. 13), and could be easily taken into his arms, as he laid his hand upon them to impart his blessing.

17 ¶ <sup>k</sup> And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is none good, but one, that is God.*

19 Thou knowest the commandments, <sup>l</sup> Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him,

<sup>k</sup> Mat. 18: 3. <sup>l</sup> Mat. 19: 16; Lu. 18: 18.  
<sup>l</sup> Ex. 20; Ro. 13: 9.

17-31. See Ns. on Matt. 19: 16-35; Luke 18: 18-30.

17. *Into the way towards Jerusalem*, whither he was now going for the last time, before his crucifixion. *Running*. This shows his eager desire to inquire of Jesus the way to obtain eternal life. *Kneeled to him*, as a token of respect to him as a religious teacher. Prostration was common among the Orientals, when an inferior came into the presence of a superior. *Asked him*. See N. on 7: 17.

19. *Thou knowest the commandments*. The enumeration is the same as in Matthew and in Luke, the words *defraud not*, being added, and probably standing for the tenth commandment. Matthew sums up the spirit and essence of the laws of the second table in the words, "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," which Mark and Luke have omitted. This shows that the evangelists are not copyists one from another.

21. *Loved him*. Nothing more than a kindly feeling of regard for such correct deportment, is implied in this expression. Our Lord felt a lively interest

One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have <sup>m</sup> treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

23 ¶ <sup>n</sup> And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them <sup>o</sup> that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

25 It is easier for a camel to

*m* Mat. 6: 19, 20. *n* Mat. 19: 23; Lu. 18: 24.  
*o* Job 31: 24; Ps. 52: 7; 1 Ti. 6: 17.

in him, as one of remarkably correct habits, and whose opportunity for usefulness was great, if he acted from the high motives of the gospel. These words are omitted in Matthew and Luke. *One thing thou lackest* to be perfect, as far as perfection can be found in human beings. So Matthew: "if thou wilt be perfect." *Take up the cross* (see N. on Matt. 10: 38). This also is wanting in Matthew and Luke. Mark is usually quite circumstantial.

23. *Looked round about*, as though amazed at the infatuation of the young man, in being unwilling to part with his earthly possessions, to obtain eternal life. See N. on 3: 5.

24. *Were astonished*, &c. They had been in the habit of believing, that the rich and powerful would most assuredly share in the glory and emoluments of the Messianic kingdom, the spiritual nature of which they had not yet fully apprehended. *For them that trust*, &c. This explains the whole matter. It was their trust in riches, their devo-

go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26 And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?

27 And Jesus looking upon them, saith, With men *it is* impossible, but not with God: for <sup>p</sup> with God all things are possible.

28 <sup>q</sup> Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

*p* Je. 32: 17; Mat. 19: 26. *q* Mat. 19: 27.

tion to wealth, and their absorbing desire to increase their possessions, which made it easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for one of them to enter into the kingdom of God. The difficulty lay not in the want of provision for their salvation, on the part of God, but in putting their trust in riches. This should not only fill with alarm those, who are possessed of wealth hoarded up for their own selfish purposes, but those who are eagerly seeking riches, as their ultimate and greatest good, for this class also are included in the mighty sweep of our Lord's solemn assertion. Perhaps this may account for the astonishment, with which the disciples inquired among themselves, *who then* (literally, *and who then*) *can be saved?* To this our Lord makes no direct reply, but refers the removal of this great obstacle to the grace and power of God. *Were astonished out of measure*. This is even more emphatic than Matt. 19: 25, on which see Note.

30 \*But he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

31 \*But many *that are first* shall be last; and the last first.

32 ¶ 'And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. "And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him,

33 *Saying*, Behold, we go up

r 2 Ch. 25: 9; Lu. 18: 30. s Mat. 19: 30.

30. *Now in this time*, i. e. during the present life. The temporal blessings here enumerated are not to be taken in a literal sense, as is evident from the plural *mothers*, nature having given but one to each person. They are employed to correspond to the temporal sacrifices spoken of in the preceding verse, but are intended to designate spiritual blessings, which shall far exceed the earthly losses and privations, endured for the cause of Christ. Alford refers the omission of *father*, in this enumeration, to the fact of our high and absorbing relation to our Father in heaven. But this is rather fanciful, inasmuch as the word *wives* is also omitted in Mark, while both *wife* and *father* are found in the parallel passage in Matthew. *With persecutions*, i. e. even amidst persecutions. This also shows that the blessings referred to, are of a spiritual nature, and not dependent upon the favor of man, inasmuch as persecution itself cannot take them away. It is true, however, that oftentimes the children of God can trace the possession of temporal blessings, to the open and faithful profession of Jesus Christ, and find that even in the present life, "in keeping his commandments there is great reward."

32-34. See Ns. on Matt. 20: 17-19; Luke 18: 31-34.

to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and they shall deliver him to the Gentiles:

34 And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him; and the third day he shall rise again.

35 ¶ \* And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire.

36 And he said unto them,

t Mat. 20: 17. u Lu. 9: 22. x Mat. 20: 20.

32. *In the way leading to Jerusalem*. See N. on v. 17. *Jesus went before them*. He led the way with more than usual ardor, although he was going now to the scene of his suffering and death. *They were amazed*. See N. on Matt. 20: 17, where this is explained. *Were afraid* of the consequences of his seeming rashness, in venturing at this time to go to Jerusalem, into the midst of his malignant and deadly enemies. Perhaps mingled with this presentiment of evil, was a certain indefinable awe, inspired by the air of majesty and authority, with which he was invested, as his hour drew near. *He took again*, &c. He had before spoken to them of his future sufferings and death (Matt. 16: 21; 17: 23; Mark 9: 31), but not in such full and unequivocal terms.

34. *They shall mock him*, &c. This refers to the Gentiles, as is evident from Matt. 20: 19. *Shall spit upon him*. This indignity is omitted in Matthew, but is found in Luke.

35-45. See Notes on Matt. 20: 20-28. There is scarcely a single particular, in the account of this request of the sons of Zebedee, made through their mother, in which Mark differs from Matthew. There are slight verbal variations, which show, however, that the one was not a copyist of the other.

What would ye that I should do for you ?

37 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

38 But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask : can ye drink of the cup that I drink of ? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with ?

39 And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of ; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized :

40 But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand, is not mine to give ; but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared.

41 <sup>y</sup> And when the ten heard *it*, they began to be much displeased with James and John.

42 But Jesus called them to *him*, and saith unto them, <sup>z</sup> Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, exercise lordship over them ; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

43 <sup>a</sup> But so shall it not be among you : but whosoever will <sup>y</sup> Mat. 20 : 24. <sup>z</sup> Lu. 22 : 25. <sup>a</sup> Mat. 20 : 26, 28 ; Lu. 9 : 48.

46-52. See Ns. on Matthew 20 : 29-34 ; Luke 18 : 35-43 : 19 : 1. For the reconciliation of Matthew with Mark and Luke, who speak of only one person healed, see Notes on Matt. 8 : 28 ; 20 : 30.

46. *Bartimeus*. A patronymic for son of *Tineus*. Such also are the names Bartholomew (3 : 18), and Bargesus (Acts 13 : 6). *Begging* of the passers by. Sitting is the usual posture of blind men, when asking alms, as

be great among you, shall be your minister :

44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

45 For even <sup>b</sup> the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and <sup>c</sup> to give his life a ransom for many.

46 ¶ <sup>d</sup> And they came to Jericho : and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highway side begging.

47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, *thou* son of David, have mercy on me.

48 And many charged him that he should hold his peace : but he cried the more a great deal, *Thou* son of David, have mercy on me.

49 And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise ; he calleth thee.

50 And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

51 And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee ? The

<sup>b</sup> Jn. 13 : 14 ; Phi. 2 : 7. <sup>c</sup> Mt. 20 : 28 ; 1 Ti. 2 : 6 ; Tit. 2 : 14. <sup>d</sup> Mt. 20 : 29 ; Lu. 18 : 36.

their blindness prevents their going from door to door.

49. *Be of good comfort, &c.* The original is highly spirited and graphic : *cheer up, rise, (he) calleth thee.* He had almost begun to despair of making his cries heard, but now he is called into Jesus' presence, and with haste and overflowing joy, he casts off his garment (see N. on Matt. 20 : 32), and proceeds to meet his Lord.

52. *Go thy way.* In Matthew, "Jesus



blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

52 And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; <sup>e</sup> thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

#### CHAPTER XI.

AND <sup>a</sup> when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,

2 And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring *him*.

3 And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him: and straightway he will send him hither.

*e* Mt. 9: 22; Ch. 5: 34. *a* Mt. 21: 1; Jn. 12: 14.

touched their eyes." This incident is not denied, but only omitted, by Mark and Luke. *Thy faith*, &c. See N. on Matt. 20: 34. *In the way* to Jerusalem. The hosannas which greeted our Lord's public entrance into Jerusalem, were shouted forth, we may imagine, by no one in louder and more sincere and grateful tones, than by this poor blind beggar and his companion (Matt. 20: 34), thus restored to sight, and permitted to follow in the train of the one, to whom they were indebted for their wonderful cure.

#### CHAPTER XI.

1-11. See Ns. on Matt. 21: 1-11; Luke 19: 29-44.

2. *Whereon never man sat*. Alford refers to Luke 23: 53, and remarks that "our Lord's birth, triumph, and burial were to be in this alike." *He*

4 And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him.

5 And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?

6 And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.

7 And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.

8 <sup>b</sup> And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strewed *them* in the way.

9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, <sup>c</sup> Hosanna; Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord:

10 Blessed *be* the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in

*b* Mt. 21: 8. *c* Ps. 118: 26.

*will send him* (v. 3); literally, *he sends him*, the present being used for a future of undoubted certainty. By the interpolation of a word, signifying *back* in the original, some of the more ancient interpreters referred this to our Lord, and rendered: "the Lord hath need of him, *and will immediately send him back*." But this rests on a reading of slender authority, and is at least weakened, if not controverted wholly, by the latter clause in v. 6.

4, 5. *In a place where two ways met*; literally, *in a way leading around a place*, i. e. a street of the town. *What do ye*, &c. For what purpose, or at whose direction, are ye thus loosing the colt?

10. *Blessed be the kingdom*, &c. The people thought that the Messiah's kingdom was now to be set up, and the throne of David restored. Hence, in their hosannas to Jesus, they congratu-

the name of the Lord : <sup>d</sup> Hosanna in the highest.

11 <sup>e</sup> And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple : and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

12 <sup>f</sup> And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry.

13 <sup>g</sup> And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon : and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves : for the time of figs was not yet.

14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of

<sup>d</sup> Ps. 148 : 1. <sup>e</sup> Mt. 21 : 12. <sup>f</sup> Mt. 21 : 18.  
<sup>g</sup> Mt. 21 : 19. <sup>h</sup> Mt. 21 : 12 ; Jn. 2 : 14.

lated themselves on the redemption of Israel from temporal oppression, and the restoration of the nation to its glory, under the reign of David.

11. *And had looked round about, &c.* This was not done through vain curiosity, but in order to ascertain, by personal inspection, what abuses had crept into the temple worship, and what portions of the sacred house and its courts had been profaned by money changers, and others of similar stamp. Why he deferred driving out the money changers until the next day, we are not informed. Perhaps it was not the hour of the day, when they were gathered in full number around their tables ; or he administered a rebuke, which, not proving effectual, was followed on the next day by their expulsion, as here related. *Eventide*, i. e. late evening. *Out to Bethany*. See N. on Matt. 21 : 17.

12-19. See Ns. on Matt. 21 : 18-22.

12, 13. *Were come from Bethany*, on their way to the city. *Afar off*. This shows his excessive hunger, that his eye rested on this fig tree afar off, in hopes of finding fruit thereon. *Having leaves*, and thus giving promise of hav-

thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard *it*.

15 <sup>h</sup> And they come to Jerusalem : and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves ;

16 And would not suffer that any man should carry *any* vessels through the temple.

17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, <sup>i</sup> My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer ? but <sup>k</sup> ye have made it a den of thieves.

18 And <sup>l</sup> the scribes and chief priests heard *it*, and sought how they might destroy him : for they

<sup>i</sup> Is. 56 : 7. <sup>k</sup> Je. 7 : 11. <sup>l</sup> Mt. 21 : 45, 46.  
Lu. 19 : 47.

ing fruit on its branches. *For the time of figs was not yet* ; literally, *for the season was not* (that) *of figs*, i. e. it was not yet the season for figs. The tree was clothed with leaves, but had upon it no fruit, either that which was about to ripen, or the winter figs, which remained on it from the previous autumn. On the harvest of figs, see N. on Matt. 21 : 18.

14. *No man eat fruit, &c.* In Matthew, "let no fruit grow," &c. The sentiment is the same.

15-19. See Ns. on Matt. 21 : 12, 13 ; Luke 19 : 45-48.

16, 17. *Should carry any vessel* used for common or secular purposes. *Through the temple*, i. e. the outer court, or court of the Gentiles, which had been converted by these profane traders into a secular thoroughfare. *Of all nations*. Compare Isa. 56 : 8. The temple was a type of that spiritual temple, to which all nations, under Messiah's reign, were to resort as a house of prayer. It was not, therefore, to be polluted by secular affairs.

18. *Heard it*, i. e. how he had purged the temple. *And sought, &c.* The

feared him, because <sup>m</sup> all the people was astonished at his doctrine.

19 And when even was come, he went out of the city.

20 ¶ <sup>n</sup> And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

21 And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

22 And Jesus answering, saith unto them, Have faith in God.

23 For <sup>o</sup> verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

24 Therefore I say unto you, <sup>p</sup> What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*.

25 And when ye stand praying, <sup>q</sup> forgive, if ye have aught against

<sup>m</sup> Mt. 7: 28. <sup>n</sup> Mt. 21: 19. <sup>o</sup> Mt. 17: 20; Lu. 17: 6. <sup>p</sup> Mt. 7: 7; Jn. 14: 13; Ja. 1: 5, 6.

authority, which he assumed in expelling the traders, and its implied censure of their remissness in protecting the sacred place from such pollution, exasperated afresh the scribes and priests, and they sought how they might destroy him. *For they feared him.* This is added to explain why they were obliged to resort to insidious measures, rather than to open violence. *Were astonished, &c.* See N. on Matt. 7: 28, 29.

20-26. See Ns. on Matt. 21: 20-22.

22. *Have faith in God.* Some interpret, *faith which God requires.* The original is literally to be rendered, *have faith of God*, which is susceptible of various shades of sense, but our common

any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

26 But <sup>r</sup> if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

27 ¶ And they come again to Jerusalem: <sup>s</sup> and as he was walking in the temple, there came to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders,

28 And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?

29 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

30 The baptism of John, was *it* from heaven, or of men? answer me.

31 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him?

<sup>q</sup> Mt. 6: 14; Col. 3: 13. <sup>r</sup> Mt. 18: 35. <sup>s</sup> Mt. 21: 23; Lu. 20: 1.

translation seems to be the correct one.

23, 24. *In his heart*, i. e. in his mind. This is strengthened by the affirmative expression of the same idea in the next clause. *What things soever ye desire, &c.* On the promise here given to prayer, see N. on Matt. 21: 22.

25. *When ye stand praying*, i. e. when you engage in prayer. No direction is here given, as to the posture of one who prays. On the duty of forgiveness, laid down in this and the following verse, see N. on Matt. 6: 12, 15.

27-33. See Ns. on Matt. 21: 23-32; Luke 20: 1-8. The agreement of the Evangelists is here quite close, except that Luke has a few unimportant additions.

32 But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for 'all *men* counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.

33 And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

## CHAPTER XII.

AND <sup>a</sup> he began to speak unto them by parables. A *certain* man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about *it*, and digged a *place* for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

2 And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

3 And they caught *him*, and beat him, and sent *him* away empty.

4 And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded *him* in the head, and sent

*t* Mt. 3 : 5.    *a* Mt. 21 : 33; Lu. 22 : 9.

32. *They feared the people.* In Matthew, "we fear the people." Mark expresses the same in sense, but in the narrative form. This habit of passing from the direct to the indirect narration, is very common with all the ancient writers. Some think that this is Mark's own reason, why they did not charge John with deriving his doctrine from men, and that they felt a fear of the consequences of such an assertion, but did not openly admit this, even to one another. But Luke gives the very words which they spake among themselves, "all the people will stone us," which shows that they did not attempt

*him* away shamefully handled.

5 And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.

6 Having yet therefore one son, his well beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.

7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.

8 And they took him, and killed *him*, and cast *him* out of the vineyard.

9 What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.

10 And have ye not read this scripture; <sup>b</sup>The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:

11 This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

12 <sup>c</sup>And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people; for they knew that he had spoken

*b* Ps. 118 : 22.    *c* Mt. 21 : 45, 46.

to conceal their fear of consequences from one another.

## CHAPTER XII.

1-12. See Ns. on Matt. 21 : 33-46; Luke 20 : 9-19.

9. *He will come and destroy.* On the apparent discrepancy between this answer, put by Mark into the mouth of our Lord, but by Matthew, into that of the scribes and Pharisees, see N. on Matt. 21 : 41.

12. *But feared; literally, and feared,* the antithesis being more strongly marked by this use of the copulative. It is as though it had been said, *and yet*



the parable against them : and they left him, and went their way.

13 ¶ <sup>d</sup> And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in *his* words.

14 And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Cesar, or not?

15 Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see *it*.

16 And they brought *it*. And he saith unto them, Whose *is* this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cesar's.

17 And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

18 ¶ <sup>e</sup> Then come unto him the Sadducees, <sup>f</sup> which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying,

19 Master, <sup>g</sup> Moses wrote unto

<sup>d</sup> Mt. 22: 15; Lu. 20: 20. <sup>e</sup> Mt. 22: 23.  
<sup>f</sup> Ac. 23: 8.

(great as was their desire to apprehend him) *they stood in such fear of the people*, that they dared not resort to violence. Rich shades of thought are frequently furnished, by a careful and skilful interpretation of the particles and connectives of the Greek language.

13-17. See Ns. on Matt. 22: 15-22; Luke 20: 20-26.

18-27. See Ns. on Matt. 22: 23-33; Luke 20: 27-40. These narratives

us, If a man's brother die, and leave *his* wife *behind him*, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

20 Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed.

21 And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise.

22 And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also.

23 In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife.

24 And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?

25 For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but <sup>h</sup> are as the angels which are in heaven.

26 And as touching the dead, that they rise; have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, *I am* the God of Abraham, and

<sup>g</sup> De. 25: 5. <sup>h</sup> 1 Co. 15: 42, 49, 52.  
<sup>i</sup> Ex. 3: 6.

have the most entire agreement in sense, but vary somewhat in language. Luke's account is the fullest, especially in vs. 34-36.

26. *In the bush*, i. e. in the passage or section, which speaks of the burning bush. Oftentimes an incident is thus put by way of reference, for the chapter or place, where the incident is related. Homer is often cited thus by ancient writers and critics.

the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?

27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

28 And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, 'Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy

*k* Mat. 22 : 35. *l* De. 6 : 4; Lu. 10 : 27.

27. *Ye therefore do greatly err* in such views, as you entertain of the resurrection. In the light of this reply of our Lord, we are taught the duty of obtaining correct views respecting the resurrection, so far as that event is revealed to us in God's word. It is no excuse for loose and unscriptural views, that we are unable to solve some difficulties, which attend this subject. The great doctrine that the dead are to be raised, that the soul and body are again to be united, that the physical connections and relations of this life will cease to exist, and that a new, spiritual, endless state of being is to be entered upon, should be as much the object of our belief, when found, as it is, in the word of God, as any other doctrine to which our assent is demanded.

28-34. See Ns. on Matt. 22 : 34-40.

28. *Had answered them well.* Our Lord's reply was so plain, convincing, and scriptural, that the scribe was desirous of getting his opinion on the question, which had always given rise to great discussion, as to which was the

strength: this is the first commandment.

31 And the second is like, *namely* this, <sup>m</sup> Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; <sup>n</sup> and there is none other but he:

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbour as himself, <sup>o</sup> is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

34 And when Jesus saw that

*m* Le. 19 : 18; Mat. 22 : 39; Ro. 13 : 9; Ga. 5 : 14; *Ja.* 2 : 8. *n* De. 4 : 39; Is. 45 : 6, 14. *o* 1 Sa. 15 : 22; Ho. 6 : 6; Mi. 6 : 6, 7, 8.

first or greatest commandment. See N. on Matt. 22 : 36; compare also Tit. 3 : 9.

29. *Hear, O Israel, &c.* Compare Deut. 6 : 4. This prefaced the epitome of the law, because it is the foundation of all right and obligation. No one can obey this law, who believes in a plurality of gods. Mark adds to the enumeration of Matthew, *with all thy strength*, on which see N. on Matt. 22 : 37.

32-34. This reply of the scribe, and our Lord's words of approbation, are omitted in Matthew. *Well, Master, thou hast said the truth*, i. e. thou hast spoken the truth beautifully and concisely. Some translate: *Of a truth, Master, thou hast spoken well. And to love him* (v. 33). This is to be joined to the preceding clause, as an additional reason, why the scribe regarded Jesus as having answered well. *Understanding* corresponds to *mind* in v. 30. *Whole burnt offerings*. In the whole burnt offering or holocaust, the entire victim was burned. This was regarded as one of the most acceptable offerings, and

he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. <sup>r</sup> And no man after that durst ask him *any question*.

35 ¶ <sup>q</sup> And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David?

36 For David himself said <sup>r</sup> by the Holy Ghost, 'The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my

<sup>p</sup> Mat. 22 : 46. <sup>q</sup> Mat. 22 : 41. <sup>r</sup> 2 Sa. 23 : 2.

hence is here and elsewhere inclusive of every kind of burnt offerings. *Sacrifices*. This refers to the sacrificial victims, and is added to the preceding word, to give completeness and emphasis to the idea. Of the flesh of victims thus sacrificed, a part was burned on the altar, and a part given to the priests. See Levit. chaps. II., III.

34. *Discreetly*, i. e. *wisely*. *Thou art not far*, &c. He had seized upon and entered into the spirit of our Lord's reply. His views of the law were so correct, that he was in a state of readiness to receive the gospel, and in this sense he was not far from the kingdom of God. Of this man we hear nothing further, but we may hope that he was brought to the exercise of faith in Christ, without which he might be found at the door of the kingdom of God, but not within it. We learn from this interesting incident, that correct views of truth bring a man nearer to the door of salvation, than false doctrines, or the distorted views of truth, upon which the formalist reposes, in hope of salvation beyond the grave. *No man after that*, &c. See N. on Matt. 22 : 40.

35-37. See Ns. on Matt. 22 : 41-46 ; Luke 20 : 41-44.

37. *The common people*, &c. The instructions of the Pharisees only tended to distress and perplex them, by vain distinctions in reference to points of the moral and ceremonial law, and by loading them with cumbrous rites

right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

37 David therefore himself calleth him Lord ; and whence is he *then* his son ? And the common people heard him gladly.

38 ¶ And ' he said unto them in his doctrine, " Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and <sup>s</sup> *love* salutations in the market-places,

39 And the chief seats in the

<sup>s</sup> Ps. 110 : 1. <sup>t</sup> Ch. 4 : 2. <sup>u</sup> Mat. 23 : 1, &c. ;  
Lu. 20 : 46. <sup>x</sup> Lu. 11 : 43.

and ceremonies. Our Lord swept away all these vain and burdensome traditions, and bringing them back to the spirituality of the divine law, taught them that love to God and their fellow men was the cardinal duty of life. Hence the common people heard him with gladness, and testified their love of truth by following him in throngs, as he passed from place to place through the land. What was true then is so also now. From the common people the church of Christ receives most of its members. Thus most likely will it be to the end of time. Compare 1 Cor. 1 : 26-29.

38, 39. See Luke 20 : 45, 46. These verses are not found in Matthew, but constitute a sort of abridgment or epitome of Matt. 23 : 1-12, on which see Notes. *In his doctrine*, i. e. as he was teaching. *In long clothing*. In long flowing robes, such as were worn by persons of distinction. It is not, to say the least, a very good sign for any religionists or class of men, to adopt a form or style of dress different from their fellow men, to indicate their superior sanctity, or show that they belong to a class or profession by themselves. Our Lord himself was plainly clad, but in the same style of costume, as that in which his countrymen were usually arrayed. There was nothing singular in his dress or habits of life. See Matt. 11 : 19 ; John 19 : 23. His example in this, as in other things, is

synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts :

40 <sup>v</sup> Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers : these shall receive greater damnation.

41 ¶ <sup>a</sup> And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money <sup>a</sup> into the treasury : and many that were rich cast in much.

<sup>v</sup> Mat. 23 : 14.    <sup>z</sup> Lu. 21 : 1.

worthy of our close imitation. *Salutations.* Luke : *greetings.* The same word in the original. The scribes were fond of being addressed in terms of great respect, and of being saluted as men of high distinction. *In the market places,* where men assembled in great numbers. *Chief seats.* See N. on Matt. 23 : 6, where the words *uppermost rooms,* are also explained.

40. See N. on Matt. 23 : 14 ; also Luke 20 : 47.

41-44. Compare Luke 21 : 1-4.

41. *Over against,* i. e. opposite to, in full sight of. *Treasury.* This is supposed to refer to the thirteen chests of the form of trumpets, which, according to the Rabbins, stood in the court of the women, into which the Jews cast their offerings. But the use of the singular number is not thus satisfactorily accounted for, and it is better therefore to seek for its explanation in 2 Kings 12 : 9. Alford refers it to a building, and quotes Joseph. Antiq. XIX. 6, § 1. But the incident could hardly have fallen under the eye of our Lord, as it evidently did, if a building by itself is referred to, into which the widow entered to deposit her offering. The reference is beyond all question to a box or chest, placed in some apartment or court of the temple, where the depositor would be seen by all around. *Many that were rich ;* literally, *many rich persons.* As this was the week preceding the passover, many rich Jews were gathered into the city from all parts of the land, to celebrate the feast, and deposit their offerings.

42. *Two mites.* A mite was the

42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

43 And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That <sup>b</sup> this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury :

44 For all *they* did cast in of their abundance ; but she of her

<sup>a</sup> 2 Ki. 12 : 9.    <sup>b</sup> 2 Co. 8 : 12.

smallest of Jewish coins, about the value of one-fifth of a cent. It took its name from its extreme smallness, being derived from an adjective, signifying *thin, subtle,* and applied, among other things, to that which consists of fine particles, as *dust, sand,* and metaphorically, to gentle breezes, whispering, murmuring sounds, &c. Bengel remarks that *two mites* are noticed as being deposited, because she might have kept back one. *A farthing.* See N. on Matt. 5 : 26.

43. *This poor widow ;* literally, *the widow there, that poor one.* There is great beauty and emphasis in the original. *More* in proportion to her means ; *more* in the estimation of God. *Than all they* (have cast in), *which have cast into the treasury.* They were many and rich, yet their combined offerings had not as much value, in the sight of God, as the two mites of this poor widow.

44. *For all they, &c.* This shows the reason why her offering was of such transcendent value. Theirs cost them nothing ; hers constituted all that she possessed. Their offerings were *the overflowings of* (the cup of) *their abundance* [such is the force of the original Greek], but her gift was *of her want or deficiency of means,* and might be said to have drained the last drop from the bottom of her vessel. There is not a more beautiful, striking, and instructive incident in our Lord's ministry than this, or one designed to make a more lasting impression upon the church, in respect to what constitutes the real value of an offering made to God. Thousands of hearts have been con-



want did cast in all that she had,  
*c* *even* all her living.

### CHAPTER XIII.

**A**ND *a* as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings *are here!*

2 And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? *b* there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,

4 *c* Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

*c* De. 24: 6; 1 Jn. 3: 17. *a* Mat. 24: 1; Lu. 21: 5. *b* Lu. 19: 44. *c* Mat. 24: 3; Lu. 21: 7.

forted and encouraged, the smallness of whose benevolent contributions seemèd, in a human point of view, to render them almost worthless, and whose extreme poverty seemèd to cry out against their giving even two mites. The words of the Lord Jesus, *more than they all* (Luke), have recurred to them with such sweetness and power, while in despondency at the feebleness of their means of usefulness, that they have cheerfully and thankfully given all they possessed for the promotion of his cause. Rich Christians, too, in the light of this example, have seen that the divine standard of estimating the value of an offering, is not one which regards its amount, but the heart with which it is given, and the self-denial which it costs. In this aspect, two mites from a rich man is a far different offering, than two mites from a poor widow, which constitutes her whole living; and even when the rich man, from his abundance and with true love to his

5 And Jesus answering them, began to say, *d* Take heed lest any *man* deceive you:

6 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ*; and shall deceive many.

7 And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for *such things* must needs be; but the end *shall not be* yet.

8 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in *divers* places, and there shall be famines and troubles: *e* these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

9 ¶ But *f* take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye

*d* Je. 29: 8; Ep. 5: 6; 1 Th. 2: 3. *e* Mat. 24: 8. *f* Mat. 10: 17; Re. 2: 10.

Redeemer, casts a large offering into the treasury, it cannot, in the nature of the case, reach the self-denial of one who gives his whole living, like the poor widow. He only makes an acceptable offering, whose love to God is such, that he would make it, if it cost him the extremest self-denial to do thus. There is no duty which, in the light of this passage and Matt. 6: 1-4, requires more searching self-examination, and more prayer for the spirit and self-denial of this poor widow, than that of almsgiving and contribution to the objects of Christian benevolence.

### CHAPTER XIII.

1-13. See Ns. on Matt. 24: 1-14; Luke 21: 5-19.

4. The question is here and in Luke twofold. In Matthew it is threefold. There is no discrepancy, the second in Mark and Luke embracing the second and third in Matthew.

9-13. These verses are explained in

shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.

10 And <sup>9</sup> the gospel must first be published among all nations.

11 But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate : but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye : for it is not ye that speak, 'but the Holy Ghost.

12 Now <sup>k</sup> the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son ; and children shall rise up against *their* parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

13 'And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake : but <sup>m</sup> he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14 <sup>n</sup> But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, <sup>o</sup> spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then <sup>p</sup> let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains :

*o* Mat. 24 : 14. *h* Mat. 10 : 19. *i* Ae. 2 : 4. *k* Mi. 7 : 6 ; Mat. 10 : 21 ; Lu. 21 : 16. *l* Mat. 24 : 9 ; Lu. 21 : 17. *m* Da. 12 : 12 ; Mat. 10 : 22 ; Re. 2 : 10. *n* Mat. 24 : 15.

Notes on Matt. 10 : 17-22. *Take heed to yourselves* (v. 9). They were not to expose themselves to unnecessary danger. They were to use all proper means to preserve their lives, unless by so doing, some great truth would be sacrificed, or duty remain undone. *They*, i. e. the persecutors of the church. *Councils*. See N. on Matt. 10 : 17. *In the synagogues*. The full construction in the Greek is : *ye shall be dragged into the synagogues and there beaten*. See N. on Matt. 10 : 16.

10. *And this gospel, &c.* See N. on Matt. 13 : 14.

15 And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter *therein*, to take any thing out of his house :

16 And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment.

17 <sup>q</sup> But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days !

18 And praye that your flight be not in the winter.

19 <sup>r</sup> For *in* those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

20 And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved : but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

21 <sup>s</sup> And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here *is* Christ ; or lo, *he is* there ; believe *him* not.

22 For false Christs, and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if *it were* possible, even the elect.

23 But <sup>t</sup> take ye heed : behold,

*o* Da. 9 : 27. *p* Lu. 21 : 21. *q* Lu. 21 : 23, 29. *r* Da. 9 : 26 ; Joel 2 : 2 ; Mat. 24 : 21. *s* Mat. 24 : 23 ; Lu. 17 : 23. *t* 2 Pe. 3 : 17.

14-37. See Ns. on Matt. 24 : 15-42 ; Luke 21 : 20-36.

14, 15. *Where it ought not*, i. e. in the holy place. See N. on Matt. 24 : 15. *Not go down into the house, neither enter therein*. The last clause, which, as it stands in our translation, seems to be a repetition of the preceding one, is rather to be taken as a command, not to enter the house either from the housetop, or from any other place, where the person may happen to be, when he first deseries the abomination here spoken of. The words may be paraphrased : *nor enter into the house*

I have foretold you all things.

24 "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light,

25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.

26 "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

27 And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

28 <sup>y</sup> Now learn a parable of the fig tree : When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near :

<sup>u</sup> Da. 7 : 10 ; Zeph. 1 : 15 ; Mat. 24 : 29.  
<sup>w</sup> Da. 7 : 13, 14 ; Mat. 16 : 27 ; Ac. 1 : 11 ; 1 Th. 4 : 16 ; 2 Th. 1 : 7, 10 ; Re. 1 : 7.

from any quarter, for the purpose of taking something therefrom.

18. The words, "neither on the sabbath-day," found in the parallel passage in Matthew, are here omitted, for the reason, as some think, that Mark wrote for Gentile readers, and did not deem it necessary to report this.

32. *Neither the Son.* This passage has always proved a stumbling-block to those expositors and critics, who forget that Jesus had a human as well as divine nature, and that his humanity was complete, or in other words, that his human nature was limited like ours, in its mental capacities and attainments. In this view, the ignorance of the Son here referred to, involves no greater difficulty than what is said by Luke (2 : 52), that he "increased in wisdom, and in favor with God and man," which certainly could not be predicated of his divine nature. The fact that our Lord possessed two natures, the divine and human, each complete, and neither of the two interfering with or modifying

29 So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, *even* at the doors.

30 Verily I say unto you, That this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

31 Heaven and earth shall pass away : but <sup>r</sup> my words shall not pass away.

32 But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

33 <sup>a</sup> Take ye heed, watch and pray : for ye know not when the time is.

34 <sup>b</sup> *For the Son of man is* as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man

<sup>y</sup> Mat. 24 : 32 ; Lu. 21 : 29, &c. <sup>z</sup> Is. 40 : 8.  
<sup>a</sup> Mat. 24 : 42 ; Lu. 12 : 40 ; Ro. 13 : 11 ; 1 Th. 5 : 6. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 24 : 45.

essentially the attributes of the other, is distinctly and abundantly revealed in Scripture. The manner of their co-existence in one person, in such distinctness and yet intimate union, is of course wholly beyond our comprehension. Let us receive the great truth then, as it is revealed, and believing Jesus Christ to be verily God and man, trust in him as our Almighty Redeemer, who is both willing and able to save to the uttermost all, who come to God through him. See N. on Matt. 24 : 36.

33-37. See Ns. on Matt. 24 : 42-51.

33. *Take ye heed*, &c. This direction implies the most intense watchfulness and prayer. The reason is given in the next clause, viz. their ignorance of the time of their Lord's coming.

34. *For the Son of man is.* These words are supplied in our English translation. The original is so constructed, that the arrangement made by the householder, at his departure, is represented by participles, while his last charge to the porter is rendered em-

his work; and commanded the porter to watch.

35 <sup>c</sup> Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:

36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

**A**FTER <sup>a</sup> two days was *the feast of the passover*, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put *him* to death.

<sup>c</sup> Mat. 24: 42; 44. <sup>a</sup> Mat. 26: 2; Jno. 11: 55.

phatic by being the verb. The literal rendering is: *as a man about to journey, when leaving his house, after having given authority to his servants, and to every man his work, ENJOINS upon the porter also to watch.* The whole point of the simile lies in the watchfulness enjoined upon the porter. It was his duty to see that no improper persons were admitted, and that those to whom the door was opened, received that attention, which the laws of hospitality required. As this was a post of great responsibility, the duty of watchfulness was imposed upon him, and with the emphasis, which always attends a last command, when one is just leaving his house.

35. *Watch ye therefore* as the door-porter, who obeyed the command of his absent lord. See N. on Matt. 24: 42. *At even, or at midnight, &c.* This refers to the four popular divisions into which the Jews divided the night.

36, 37. *He find you sleeping*, i. e. remiss in duty, inattentive to his commands, and in a state of worldly mindedness. *I say unto all*, i. e. all my followers in every age and country. Not only were the Jewish Christians to

2 But they said, Not on the feast *day*, lest there be an uproar of the people.

3 ¶ <sup>b</sup> And being in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious; and she brake the box, and poured *it* on his head.

4 And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?

5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

6 And Jesus said, Let her

<sup>b</sup> Mat. 26: 6; Jn. 12: 1, 8.

watch the sign of his coming to destroy Jerusalem, and his still more solemn coming at the hour of death and at the last judgment, but also all who would be prepared for those great and final events, were to take this same direction, as addressed with emphatic earnestness to themselves.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

1-11. See Ns. on Matt. 26: 1-16; Luke 22: 1-6.

1. *Of unleavened bread.* The seven days immediately following the passover, were called days of unleavened bread, because during that time the Jews ate that kind of bread. It is here connected with the passover, because the eating the paschal lamb was the commencement of the days of unleavened bread.

3. *She brake the box.* This is spoken of the neck of the vase. It is very absurd to suppose, with some, that she crushed the alabaster box in the hand, and thus anointed his head with the ointment.

5, 6. *Three hundred pence.* For the value of this, see N. on Matt. 18: 28. *Murmured against her* for this prodigal



alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.

7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

8 She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

9 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* also that she hath done shall be spoken of, for a memorial of her.

10 ¶ <sup>d</sup> And Judas Iscariot, one

*c* De. 15: 11. *d* Mat. 26: 14.

waste. *Let her alone.* The plural form is here used, although, as it appears from John, the person particularly addressed was Judas. It is evident that others of the disciples shared in the indignation of Judas at this apparent waste, although not from the same selfish motive.

8. *She hath done, &c.* See 12: 44, where the poor widow is said to have made an offering of all that she had. *She is come aforehand.* She has anticipated the hour of my decease, anointing my body before death, and thus preparing it for burial. It is worthy of note, that this was all the anointing, which our Lord's body received from the hand of Mary or her female friends, inasmuch as he had risen, before they reached the sepulchre with their spices. It was therefore in verity an anointing beforehand, although she was not aware of the full import of her act of love. It was prospective love, yet not as Alford teaches, "grounded on the deepest apprehension of the reality of our Lord's announcement of his approaching death," for neither Mary nor the apostles seem to have realized the literal import of the painful declaration made by him of that event.

11. *And when they heard it, &c.*

of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.

11 And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

12 'And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?

13 And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them,

*e* Mat. 26: 17; Lu. 22: 7.

This refers to the question, which he proposed, as to what reward he might expect for betraying his Master. See Matt. 26: 15. *Were glad.* They were now unexpectedly furnished with an opportunity of getting him in their power, and they joyfully accepted the proposal. They at once take measures for his immediate apprehension, which, through fear of the tumult which would thereby be excited, they had previously determined to defer until the end of the feast. See Matt. 26: 17-19.

12-16. See Ns. on Matt. 26: 17-19; Luke 22: 7-13.

12. *When they killed the passover.* Luke: "when the passover must be killed." This renders it quite certain, that it was the usual or ordinary day, when our Lord ate the passover, and that he did not, as some think, anticipate the time.

13. *Two of his disciples.* Peter and John (Luke). If Peter superintended Mark's gospel, as is generally supposed, a reason for the omission of the names will readily be found in his modesty. *A man.* He was probably one of the servants or domestics of the *goodman* spoken of in the next verse. *Follow him.* Keep sight of him, and go to the same house, which he shall enter.

14. *Goodman of the house.* This is

Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water : follow him.

14 And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples ?

15 And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared : there make ready for us.

16 And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them : and they made ready the passover.

17 <sup>f</sup> And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.

18 And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me.

19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one

<sup>f</sup> Mat. 26 : 20, &c. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 26 : 24 ; Lu. 22 : 22.

the same word, which is translated, *master of the house* in Matt. 10 : 25 ; and *householder*, in Matt. 13 : 27 ; 20 : 1. *Guestchamber* ; literally, a *halting or lodging-place* ; an *inn*. Here in a more limited sense, a *room of entertainment*.

15. *Large upper room*. The upper room, or one connected with the roof, was used as a reception room or parlor, and oftentimes as a dining room. Jerusalem being at this time crowded with persons, who had come up from all parts to keep the feast, all the rooms of the houses would be put in requisition for their accommodation, and hence this guestchamber was already furnished and prepared with beds, couches, sofas, and every thing which constituted the furniture of an Oriental room. *Make ready*. As the room was already prepared and furnished, the

by one, *Is it I ?* and another said, *Is it I ?*

20 And he answered and said unto them, *It is one of the twelve that dippeth with me in the dish*.

21 <sup>g</sup> The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him : but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed ! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

22 <sup>h</sup> And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake *it*, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat : this is my body.

23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks he gave *it* to them : and they all drank of it.

24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

25 Verily I say unto you, I

<sup>h</sup> Mat. 26 : 26 ; 1 Co. 11 : 23.

disciples had nothing to do but to get ready the passover itself.

16. *Went forth* from Bethany. *And found*, &c. Another proof of his omniscience.

17-21. See Ns. on Matt. 26 : 20-25 ; Luke 22 : 14-18 ; 21-23 ; John 13 : 21-35. In Luke we have a more full account of his eating the paschal feast.

18. *One of you which eateth*, &c. This is a repetition of the citation, which he had just before made (John 13 : 18) from Ps. 41 : 9. Luke varies the announcement : " the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table."

22-25. See Ns. on Matt. 26 : 26-29 ; Luke 22 : 19, 20. See also 1 Cor. 11 : 23-25. There is little variety in these four accounts, except that Luke and Paul add the interesting clause, " this do in remembrance of me."

will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

26 <sup>k</sup> And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

27 <sup>k</sup> And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, <sup>i</sup> I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

28 But <sup>m</sup> after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

29 <sup>n</sup> But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet *will* not I.

30 And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, *even* in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

31 But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

32 <sup>o</sup> And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples,

<sup>i</sup> Mat. 26: 30. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 26: 31. <sup>l</sup> Zec. 13: 7. <sup>m</sup> Ch. 16: 7. <sup>n</sup> Mat. 26: 33, 34; Jn. 18: 37, 38. <sup>o</sup> Mat. 26: 36; Lu. 22: 39.

26-31. See Ns. on Matt. 26: 30-35. The accounts of the two evangelists agree here almost verbatim.

31. *More vehemently*; literally, *beyond measure or bounds*. In the light of Peter's example, we see that it is not one who makes the most vehement protestations of steadfastness and fidelity, who is most likely to stand firm in the hour of trial, but he, who through a sense of weakness, throws himself upon the covenant faithfulness of God, and trusts in him for grace to resist temptation.

Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;

34 And saith unto them, <sup>p</sup> My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.

35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

36 And he said, <sup>q</sup> Abba, Father, <sup>r</sup> all things *are* possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: <sup>s</sup> nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.

37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour?

38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. <sup>t</sup> The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

39 And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words.

40 And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their

<sup>p</sup> Jn. 12: 27. <sup>q</sup> Ro. 8: 15; Ga. 4: 6.  
<sup>r</sup> He. 5: 7. <sup>s</sup> Jn. 5: 30.  
<sup>t</sup> Ro. 7: 23; Ga. 5: 17.

32-42. See Ns. on Matt. 26: 36-46; Luke 22: 39-46; John 18: 1.

36. *Abba*, i. e. *father*. An Aramaic word, like Ephphatha (7: 34), and Talitha cumi (5: 41). Alford says that *Father* is not here intended as the interpretation of *Abba*, but is attached to it, as a phrase or form of address.

40, 41. *Neither wist they*, &c. They were too confused at their being again found sleeping, during this hour of their Master's distress, to make any reply. They had no excuse to offer, and remained silent under his reproof.

eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him.

41 And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: it is enough, <sup>u</sup> the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hand of sinners.

42 <sup>z</sup> Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

43 <sup>y</sup> And immediately while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

44 And he that betrayed him, had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead *him* away safely.

45 And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, Master; and kissed him.

46 ¶ And they laid their hands on him, and took him.

<sup>u</sup> Jn. 13: 1. <sup>z</sup> Mat. 26: 46; Jn. 18: 1, 2. <sup>y</sup> Mat. 26: 47; Jn. 18: 3. <sup>z</sup> Mat. 26: 53; Lu. 22: 52.

*It is enough.* I no longer stand in need of your vigils. The hour of my betrayal into the hands of my enemies is come. This appears to be the sense, although some expositors refer it to his relief from mental distress.

43-52. See Ns. on Matt. 26: 47-56; Luke 22: 47-53; John 18: 10-12.

43. *And immediately while he yet spake.* The sudden approach of Judas and his band, gives to the preceding words of Jesus great significancy. Their abruptness and apparent disconnection are not to be attributed, however, to any perturbation of his mind, for he has now become calm and self-collected, but are to be regarded as words of incitement addressed to his

47 And one of them that stood by, drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

48 <sup>z</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and *with* staves to take me?

49 I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but <sup>a</sup> the scriptures must be fulfilled.

50 <sup>b</sup> And they all forsook him, and fled.

51 And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen coat cast about *his* naked *body*; and the young men laid hold on him.

52 And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

53 ¶ <sup>c</sup> And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.

54 And Peter followed him afar

<sup>a</sup> Ps. 22: 6; Is. 53: 7, &c. <sup>b</sup> Ps. 88: 8; ver. 27. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 26: 57; Jn. 18: 13.

followers, worn down and dispirited by watchfulness, anxiety, and terror at the impending calamity.

44. *Lead him away safely.* "Hold him fast" (Matthew). Perhaps Judas was apprehensive that our Lord, as on former occasions (Luke 4: 30; John 10: 39), would in some way escape from them, and he would lose the wages of his treachery. Hence he strictly charges those who led him away, to hold him fast, and lead him away safely.

51. See N. on Matt. 26: 56. *A linen cloth about his body.* It was thrown hastily around him, as hearing the tumult he ran from his house to learn the cause. *The young men,* i. e. the soldiers. *And he left;* literally, and



off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire.

55 <sup>d</sup> And the chief priests and all the council, sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found none.

56 For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together.

57 And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying,

58 We heard him say, ' I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.

59 But neither so did their witness agree together.

60 <sup>j</sup> And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against thee?

<sup>d</sup> Mat. 26: 59. <sup>e</sup> Ch. 15: 29; Jn. 2: 19.  
<sup>f</sup> Mat. 26: 62.

*having left.* In attempting to lay hold on him, they grasped only the loose folds of the linen cloth. Letting this remain with them, he fled away and escaped, either not being pursued, or taking advantage of his knowledge of the place, in the darkness of the night to elude his pursuers.

53-65. See Ns. on Matt. 26: 57-68; Luke 22: 54, 63-65; John 18: 13-18; 25-27.

56. *Agreed not together*, i. e. was not consistent with one another. No legal conviction could be obtained, unless on the concurrent testimony of two witnesses. Compare Deut. 17: 6.

58, 59. *That is made with hands.* These words were not spoken by our Lord, but were falsely attributed to him, in order to put it beyond question,

61 But <sup>g</sup> he held his peace, and answered nothing. <sup>h</sup> Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?

62 And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

63 Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses?

64 Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.

65 And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.

66 ¶ <sup>k</sup> And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh

<sup>g</sup> Is. 53: 7. <sup>h</sup> Mat. 26: 63. <sup>i</sup> Mat. 24: 30;  
<sup>l</sup> Lu. 22: 69. <sup>k</sup> Mat. 26: 58, 59; Jn. 18: 16.

that he referred to the temple. *But neither so* (in this false assertion) *did their witness agree together.* There were essential points of difference, which showed that they had perjured themselves.

61. *The Blessed.* An ordinary Hebrew expression for the Deity. See Luke 1: 68; Rom. 1: 25.

65. *Prophecy.* In Matthew and Luke the explanatory words are added, *who smote thee. Did strike him with the palms of their hands*; literally, *cast at him with slaps*, the idea seeming to be blows applied violently with the open hand.

66-74. See Ns. on Matt. 26: 69-75; Luke 22: 55-61; John 18: 15-27.

66. *Beneath.* The room in which Jesus was examined, was slightly ele-

one of the maids of the high priest :

67 And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.

68 But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch ; and the cock crew.

69 <sup>1</sup> And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is *one* of them.

70 And he denied it again. <sup>2</sup> And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art *one* of them : <sup>3</sup> for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth *thereto*.

<sup>1</sup> Mat. 26 : 71 ; Jn. 18 : 25. <sup>m</sup> Mt. 26 : 73 ; Lu. 22 : 59. <sup>n</sup> Ac. 2 : 7.

vated above the open court where Peter was.

68. *I know not* the man. See Matt. 26 : 72, 74, where this constitutes his second and third denial. It appears from Mark, that his first denial embraced also all knowledge of his Master. Thus his denials, from beginning to end, went beyond what was necessary for his exculpation, for he was only charged with being a follower of Jesus, whereas he denied that he ever knew him. *Neither understand I, &c.* He professed such profound ignorance of Jesus, that he declares himself unable to enter at all into the meaning of her charge.

69. *A maid* ; literally, *the maid*, i. e. the one who had made the previous charge. For the harmonizing of this statement with that of Matthew, see N. on Matt. 26 : 71.

70. *For thou art a Galilean*. His broad dialect betrayed him. It is evident that Peter failed to convince these persons of his not belonging to the party of Jesus, and that, in their estimation he was guilty of falsehood. It

71 But he began to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

72 <sup>o</sup> And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

#### CHAPTER XV.

AND <sup>a</sup> straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried *him* away, and delivered *him* to Pilate.

2 <sup>b</sup> And Pilate asked him, Art <sup>o</sup> Mat. 26 : 75. <sup>a</sup> Ps. 2 : 2 ; Mt. 27 : 1 ; Lu. 22 : 66 ; Ac. 3 : 13. <sup>b</sup> Mat. 27 : 11.

is hardly supposable that he did not show signs of conscious guilt, when thus repeatedly charged with being one of Jesus' followers.

72. *When he thought thereon*. The explanation of this is somewhat doubtful. The Greek verb literally signifies, *to cast upon*, which has given rise to the various interpretations: 1, *casting* (his mantle) *upon* or *over* his head, through grief and shame ; 2, *casting* (his eyes) *upon* Jesus ; 3, *casting* himself out of the house. But our common translation is far preferable, *casting* (his mind) *upon* the past, i. e. reflecting on the warnings he had received from his Lord, his own vain and boastful confidence, and above all his repeated denials of Jesus, and that too within sight of him.

#### CHAP. XV.

1-5. See Ns. on Matt. 27 : 1-15 ; Luke 23 : 1-5 ; John 18 : 28-38. John's account is here much the fullest, and is referred to in the Notes on Matthew, so far as is necessary to keep the chain of events unbroken.

thou the King of the Jews? And he answering, said unto him, Thou sayest *it*.

3 And the chief priests accused him of many things; but he answered nothing.

4 <sup>c</sup> And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee.

5 <sup>d</sup> But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.

6 Now <sup>e</sup> at *that* feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.

7 And there was *one* named Barabbas, *which* lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.

8 And the multitude crying aloud began to desire *him to do* as he had ever done unto them.

9 But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release un-

<sup>c</sup> Mat. 27: 13. <sup>d</sup> Is. 53: 7; Jno. 19: 9.

<sup>e</sup> Mat. 27: 15; Jno. 18: 39.

6-15. See Ns. on Matt. 27: 15-26; Luke 23: 17-25; John 18: 39-40.

7, 8. *Bound with them*, &c. This shows that he belonged to a band of murderers, of whom he was most likely the leader. *The multitude crying aloud*. This is omitted in Matthew, where Pilate first proposes to them the choice between Jesus and this robber (on which see Note).

9. *Will ye that I release*. Mark agrees with Matthew in sense, but in words, more strictly with John. We have evidence on every page, that the evangelists were not copyists of one another. *The King of the Jews*. In Matthew: "Jesus which is called Christ." The expressions are synonymous.

11. *Moved the people*; more literally, *excited, instigated*. An active and urgent influence is denoted by the word.

13, 14. *Again* refers only to the

to you the King of the Jews?

10 For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.

11 But <sup>f</sup> the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

12 And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do *unto him* whom ye call the King of the Jews?

13 And they cried out again, Crucify him.

14 Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

15 ¶ <sup>g</sup> And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged *him*, to be crucified.

16 <sup>h</sup> And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Pre-

<sup>f</sup> Mat. 27: 20; Ac. 3: 14. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 27: 26.

<sup>h</sup> Mat. 27: 27.

words *cried out*, as now for the first time they demand his crucifixion, urged on thereto by the priests and rulers. *Why, what evil*, &c. Literally, *for what evil*, &c. Such forms are elliptical. Fully: why shall I crucify him, *for what evil*, &c.

15. *To content*; literally, *to satisfy*, i. e. to remove all grounds of complaint, and render himself popular with the people. In this whole transaction, Pilate sacrificed every principle of justice and humanity to his self-interest.

16-19. See Ns. on Matt. 27: 27-30; John 19: 1-9. This portion is omitted by Luke.

16. *Pretorium*. This name was given to the general's tent or quarters in the camp, but came in time to be applied to the palace of any provincial governor. The Procurators of Judea had their head-quarters at Cæsarea, but

torium; and they called together the whole band.

17 And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head,

18 And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews!

19 And they smote him on the head with a reed, and spit upon him, and bowing *their* knees worshipped him.

20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on

*i* Mat. 27: 32; Lu. 23: 26. *h* Mat. 27: 33; Lu. 23: 33.

him, and led him out to crucify him.

21 <sup>i</sup> And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.

22 <sup>k</sup> And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.

23 <sup>l</sup> And they gave him to drink, wine mingled with myrrh: but he received *it* not.

24 And when they had crucified

*l* Mat. 27: 34. *m* Ps. 22: 18; Lu. 23: 34.

when they visited Jerusalem, took up their quarters in Herod's palace, situated on the northern part of the upper city Zion, and overlooking, from the west, the temple. For this reason, the palace was called, after Roman usage, the Pretorium. As used here by Mark, it signifies the open court or guard-room, where the procurator's guard had their station.

17. *Purple*. Various shades of red are comprised under this term. Here it has the sense of *purple-red*, or *crimson*. See N. on Matt. 27: 28. *Put it about*. The same word is used by Matthew, of their arraying him in a scarlet robe.

20-23. See Ns. on Matt. 27: 31-34; Luke 23: 26-33; John 19: 16, 17.

21, 23. *Coming out of the country*, for the purpose, probably, of celebrating the festival. *Myrrh*. In Matthew (27: 34) *gall*, on which see Note.

24-28. See Ns. on Matt. 27: 35-38; Luke 23: 33, 34, 38; John 19: 18-24.

24. *And when they had crucified*. Our common translation would lead one to suppose, by a comparison with the following verse, that they twice crucified Jesus. Either we must translate v. 25, "it was the third hour *when they had crucified him*," a tense which the original will permit; or in the passage before us, the aorist must be considered

as having reference to the beginning of the act of crucifixion, regarded as composed of successive parts, viz. the stripping of our Lord, the nailing of him to the cross, its elevation, &c. We may then render it, *having proceeded to crucify*, or *on crucifying*. In this way the statements are rendered congruous and natural. *The third hour*. In John 19: 14, when Pilate brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat, it is said to have been about the sixth hour. This has been seized upon by some, as an irreconcilable discrepancy between Mark and John. But it should be remembered, that this has relation purely to time, and does not affect the integrity or truthfulness of their respective accounts of the crucifixion, in which there is a remarkable agreement in all the evangelists. Unless some error of number has crept into the MSS., we must suppose John to have had some different mode of reckoning time from Mark. The designation of numbers by the Greek letters of the alphabet, rendered it a fruitful source of mistakes by copyists and transcribers. The letter denoting *three*, *third*, is  $\gamma$ , *Gamma*; that used for *six*, *sixth*,  $\varsigma$ , *Sti* or *Stigna*. The old form of these letters was  $\Gamma$ ,  $\varsigma$ , which rendered them easily mistaken, the one for the other. It is the unanimous



him, <sup>m</sup> they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.

25 And <sup>n</sup> it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

26 And <sup>o</sup> the superscription of his accusation was written over, **THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

27 And <sup>p</sup> with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

28 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, <sup>q</sup> And he was numbered with the transgressors.

29 And <sup>r</sup> they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, <sup>s</sup> thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days,

30 Save thyself, and come down from the cross.

31 Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save.

32 Let Christ the King of

<sup>m</sup> Ps. 22 : 18; Lu. 23 : 34. <sup>n</sup> See Mat. 27 : 45; Jno. 19 : 14. <sup>o</sup> Mat. 27 : 37. <sup>p</sup> Mat. 27 : 38. <sup>q</sup> Is. 53 : 12. <sup>r</sup> Ps. 22 : 7. <sup>s</sup> Jno. 2 : 19.

opinion of all commentators, that Mark's designation of time is here the true one.

28 *And the scripture was fulfilled, &c.* The quotation is from Isa. 53 : 12. The prophecy and its literal fulfilment, must strike all as very remarkable. Any one who should have declared on his own authority, that the Messiah of the Jews was to be reckoned with malefactors, and counted as one of them before the legal tribunal of his nation, would have been rightly regarded, as making one of the wildest and most extravagant assertions, and would have been called a fool or madman. But the prophecy here referred to, was uttered more than 700 years before its fulfilment, and not only de-

Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And <sup>t</sup> they that were crucified with him reviled him.

38 And <sup>u</sup> when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land, until the ninth hour.

34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, <sup>v</sup> Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

35 And some of them that stood by, when they heard *it*, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.

36 And <sup>w</sup> one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and <sup>x</sup> gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.

37 <sup>y</sup> And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

<sup>t</sup> Mat. 27 : 44. <sup>u</sup> Mat. 27 : 45; Lu. 23 : 44. <sup>v</sup> Ps. 22 : 1; Mt. 27 : 46. <sup>w</sup> Mat. 27 : 48; Jn. 19 : 29. <sup>x</sup> Ps. 69 : 21. <sup>y</sup> Mat. 27 : 50; Jn. 19 : 30.

clares that this obloquy was to be heaped upon the Messiah, but adds also other circumstances of shame and suffering, all of which were so literally fulfilled in the crucifixion of Christ, that they constitute an evidence of his true Messiahship, which no Jew, down to the present time, has been able to meet or refute.

29-32. See Ns. on Matt. 27 : 39-44.

29, 31. *Ah*; more literally, *aha*, an expression of derision, although sometimes used by the Romans to express admiration. *Said among themselves.* See N. on Matt. 27 : 41.

33-37. See Ns. on Matt. 27 : 45-50; Luke 23 : 44-46; John 19 : 28-30.

37. *Cried with*; literally, *having*

38 And <sup>b</sup> the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

39 ¶ And <sup>c</sup> when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

40 <sup>d</sup> There were also women looking on <sup>e</sup> afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome;

41 Who also, when he was in Galilee, <sup>f</sup> followed him, and minis-

<sup>b</sup> Mat. 27: 51. <sup>c</sup> Mat. 27: 54; Lu. 23: 47.  
<sup>d</sup> Mat. 27: 55; Lu. 23: 49. <sup>e</sup> Ps. 38: 11.

sent forth. The expression is used both of an articulate and inarticulate cry. Here the latter.

39-41. See Notes on Matt. 27: 51-56; Luke 23: 45, 47-49.

39. *Which stood over against him*, i. e. in full sight of him; the natural position of one presiding over such an execution. This is added to show, that all the circumstances of the crucifixion took place full in his sight, and that his testimony in favor of Jesus was the result of what he himself had seen. *Saw that he so cried out*, &c. This refers to the words pronounced in v. 34, and his sudden release from sufferings by death. Some erroneously refer it to his last cry of expiring agony. But there could have been nothing uncommon in that, unless that one having yet strength to utter so loud a cry, should die so suddenly.

40. *James the less*. See N. on Matt. 10: 3. *Salome*. Probably the same as "the mother of Zebedee's children," in the parallel passage in Matt. 27: 56.

42-47. See Ns. on Matt. 27: 57-61; Luke 23: 50-56; John 19: 38-41.

42. *Because it was the preparation*. The latter part of the day preceding the Jewish sabbath, was devoted, to a greater or less extent, in making preparation in the way of food, fuel, and other necessary things for the wants of

tered unto him; and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

42 ¶ <sup>g</sup> And now, when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,

43 Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counsellor, which also <sup>h</sup> waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

44 And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling

<sup>f</sup> Lu. 8: 2, 3. <sup>g</sup> Mat. 27: 57; Lu. 23: 50.  
<sup>h</sup> Lu. 2: 25: 38.

the day. It was, therefore, known as the *preparation hour*, an appellation given eventually to the whole of the preceding day. On the present occasion, it was of more than ordinary importance, because the sabbath fell upon the second day of the feast.

43. *An honorable counsellor*, &c. These words are explained in N. on Matt. 27: 57, although omitted by that evangelist. *Which also waited*. He was a disciple of Jesus (John 19: 38), but secretly through fear of the Jews. It was to show how different was the present state of his mind from his former timidity, that he is said to have gone *boldly* to Pilate. *Craved the body*, &c. It appears from John 19: 31, that the Jews had requested Pilate to give orders, to have the criminals dispatched in the usual way by breaking their legs, so that their bodies could be taken down. While this was being put into execution, Joseph probably signified to the soldiers his intention of taking the body of Jesus, and therefore, as he went directly to Pilate to obtain permission thus to do, they left the body for him to take down. In the light of this necessary haste of Joseph, we may give to the word translated *boldly*, the additional idea, in an *unannounced* manner to Pilate.

44. *Marvelled if he were already dead*.

unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.

45 And when he knew *it* of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

*i* Mat. 27 : 59, 60; Jn. 19 : 40. *a* Mat. 28 : 1.

See N. on Matt. 27 : 58. The word rendered *if*, in the original does not necessarily imply doubt. Our idiom is similar in the common phrases, "I wonder *at* this thing;" or "I wonder *that* this thing has so happened." *Any while*. Most critics take this in the sense of a *long* or *considerable time past*. But the word in the original is used also of time just past, which is undoubtedly its sense here. Pilate's wonder was not that he had been a long time dead—a thing neither true nor announced to him—but that he was *already* dead. It was very unusual for one to expire so soon after being suspended on the cross, and as Pilate was alive to every incident connected with a trial and execution, which had given him so much concern, his wonder was greatly excited at the suddenness of Jesus' death.

45. *Gave the body*; literally, *made a gift of the body*. The form of expression indicates the courtesy of Pilate, and his willingness to do Joseph a favor. He was far from being at ease in reference to this day's proceedings, and he was willing to gratify the friends of Jesus, and make thereby some slight amends for his injustice and want of firmness, in giving him up to be crucified.

46, 47. *In a sepulchre*. The word *in* instead of *into*, is here used to denote, not the mere act of putting the body into the tomb, but its rest in the place. See N. on Matt. 3 : 6. This was Joseph's

47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Josès beheld where he was laid.

#### CHAPTER XVI.

AND <sup>a</sup> when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome, <sup>b</sup> had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

2 <sup>c</sup> And very early in the morn-

*b* Lu. 23 : 56. *c* Lu. 24 : 1; Jn. 20 : 1.

own new tomb (Matthew 27 : 60). *Beheld where he was laid*. They had remained at the cross after he was dead, to see what disposition would be made of his body.

#### CHAP. XVI.

1. *And when the sabbath was past*, i. e. at sunset of what we should call the preceding day. It appears from Luke 23 : 55, that they prepared the spices the evening preceding the sabbath. They seem, however, to have perfected their preparations, on the evening in which the sabbath closed, so as to be in readiness to proceed early the next morning to the tomb. *Mary the mother of James*. The same Mary spoken of in 15 : 47. See 15 : 40. *Sweet spices*, i. e. aromatics. *And anoint him*. Joseph and Nicodemus had anointed the body only in a partial and hurried manner, and of this even these women may have been ignorant.

2-4. See Ns. on Matt. 18 : 1; Luke 24 : 1-3; John 20 : 1, 2.

2. *At the rising of the sun*. There is no discrepancy between this and the words of Matthew, "as it began to dawn;" and of John, "when it was yet dark." Mark agrees with them all, that it was "very early in the morning." By his additional words, *at the rising of the sun*, we cannot suppose, as Dr. Robinson with his usual good judgment remarks, that he means to contradict himself, and he must therefore have used it in a general and popular sense,

ing, the first *day* of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre ?

4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away : for it was very great.

5 <sup>d</sup> And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment ; and they were affrighted.

*d* Lu. 24 : 3 ; Jn. 20 : 11, 12.

of the rising and increasingly bright rays of the sun, which usher in his actual appearance, and cause the darkness to gradually disappear. The method of removing this difficulty, by supposing with Bloomfield two parties of women, is untenable.

3. *Who shall roll, &c.* This question was proposed on their way to the sepulchre, before they were near enough to see, as they did shortly afterwards, that the stone had been already rolled away.

4. *When they looked ;* literally, *looked up.* In the dim morning twilight, their eyes were upon the ground, watching the path they were treading. As they drew near to the sepulchre, they naturally raised their eyes to discern it in the distance. *For it was very great.* There is some doubt, as to which of the preceding clauses, if either, this refers. Alford refers the words in question to the latter clause, as a reason drawn from the size of the stone, why they could see that it was rolled away on looking up, possibly at some distance. But this seems puerile. Bloomfield supposes an omitted clause : 'and well might they say, who will roll the stone away, and behold, doubtless with surprise, that it was removed, *for it was great.*' This appears to be the true solution, making it explanatory of all which precedes.

6 ' And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted : ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified : he is risen ; he is not here : behold the place where they laid him.

7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee : there shall ye see him, <sup>f</sup> as he said unto you.

8 And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre ; for they trembled and were amazed : <sup>g</sup> neither said they any thing to

*e* Mat. 28 : 5, 6, 7. *f* Mat. 26 : 32.  
*g* See Mat. 28 : 8.

5-7. See Ns. on Matt. 18 : 5-7 ; Luke 24 : 4-8.

5. *A young man.* Matthew, "an angel." This we are left in Mark to infer, from the description of him. *In a long white garment.* See N. on Matt. 28 : 3. *They were affrighted,* as was natural, at sight of so resplendent a personage. The guard, at sight of this angel and his companion (Luke 24 : 4), "did shake and become as dead men."

7. *And Peter.* While we cannot help recurring, at this first mention of Peter after his denial of Christ and his bitter tears of repentance, to the wondrous grace and compassion, which rendered him worthy of being reassured and cheered by this special message, yet the particular mention of his name must be attributed, in part at least, to his being the oldest and leading apostle.

8. *Neither said they any thing to any man,* whom they might meet on their way to the city. The gates were by this time thronged with persons, going forth on their daily routine of business, yet to none of these did the women divulge the strange things, which they had seen and heard. Their message was to "the disciples and Peter," and they dared not to disobey. This is better than to suppose, with Alford and others, that they did not deliver the message to the disciples, at that time,



any man; for they were afraid.

9 ¶ Now when *Jesus* was risen early the first day of the week, <sup>a</sup> he appeared first to *Mary Magdalene*, <sup>i</sup> out of whom he had cast seven devils.

h Jn. 20 : 14. i Lu. 8 : 2.

because they were afraid, and that the narrative is here broken off, because no more information about these women was in possession of Mark. It was not the design of each Evangelist to write all the particulars of every transaction, but only so much as they deemed necessary. In this instance, Matthew (28 : 8) continues the narration of these women, and to him Mark leaves the further recital of their history. The words, *they were afraid*, are to be referred to their state of mind, under the dread vision which their eyes had beheld, and which impelled them to silence respecting an event, which otherwise they would have proclaimed to every one they met.

9-20. There is here an abruptness which has led some to believe, that what follows is a kind of supplementary compendium from some other hand. There is, however, only one MS. and one version, where it is not found; and the authority of these even is weakened by the great liberties taken with the text. There can be no doubt, that it is genuine, and rightly attributed to Mark.

9. *Was risen early.* We have no means of knowing the precise hour in which our Lord rose from the dead. It must have been long enough before the visit of the women, to give time for the guard to recover from their swoon of terror and leave for the city. *The first day of the week*; literally, *first (day) of the sabbath*. See N. on Matt. 28 : 1. *First to Mary Magdalene.* On the order of our Lord's appearances, see N. on Matt. 28 : 9. The second and third appearances, noted by Mark, are found in Matt. 28 : 12-14. *Out of whom he had cast, &c.* See Luke 8 : 2. As it regards the stale objection against

10 <sup>k</sup> *And* she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

11 <sup>l</sup> *And* they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had

k Lu. 24 : 10. l Lu. 24 : 11.

her being possessed of seven devils, it has no more validity than though advanced against the possibility of her being possessed by one. For aught we know, a legion of devils, as in the case of the demoniac of Gadara, may as easily take possession of a man as one only. As it regards the notion entertained by some, that *Mary of Magdala* was a courtesan, and that her reformation under the preaching of *Jesus*, is all that is meant by the ejection of seven demons, it is a figment of the imagination, having no foundation whatever in the sacred narration. Great injustice is done this woman, in the employment of her patril name *Magdalene*, to designate the unfortunate class of females, who have been reformed by the efforts of Christian benevolence.

10. *Them that had been with him*, i. e. his disciples. *As they mourned and wept.* This shows how overwhelming was their grief at their Lord's death. It was quite early in the morning, when *Mary* brought them this report, yet they had come together, to mingle their tears, and deplore the extinction of all their hopes for the redemption of Israel.

11. *Was alive.* Reference is had to the reanimation or resurrection of the body, as the continued existence and life of the soul, was not doubted by the apostles. *Believed not.* They had treated as idle tales the report of the other women (see Luke 24 : 9-11, and also N. on Matt. 28 : 9), and were so plunged in grief that, although it was confirmed by *Mary Magdalene*, they still remained incredulous to such marvellous intelligence. Nothing but the evidence of their own senses, could convince them of the resurrection of their Lord.

12. *After that*, i. e. after the occur-

been seen of her, believed not.

12 After that he appeared in another form <sup>m</sup> unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

13 And they went and told *it*

*m* Lu. 24 : 13.

rences just mentioned. The plural is used in the original. *In another form.* This refers to the walk to Emmaus (Luke 24 : 13-35), and gives the reason why the disciples did not know him on that occasion. Some think that the change of appearance referred only to his dress. But it is hardly credible, that a mere change of dress would have prevented his being recognized by his voice, manner of speech, gait, countenance, and the like. The original expression points unmistakably, in its signification, to *form* or *shape*, and it is better, therefore, to refer this change to his visage or general appearance. Some infer, however, from the words in Luke (24 : 15), "Jesus himself drew near," which seem to imply his usual appearance, that the eyes of the disciples were supernaturally holden, so that to them he seemed another person. But the expression "Jesus himself," is employed because they were then talking about him, when he became present to them, not as the subject of conversation, but in his real, physical form.

13. *The residue*, i. e. the other disciples. *Neither believed they them.* The slowness of the disciples to believe these reiterated declarations of the appearance of Jesus appears strange, unless we take into account the depth of their distress, which shut out all hope, and also the incredible nature of the report. Jesus had indeed foretold expressly his own resurrection, but they seem to have forgotten it altogether, or attached to it some mystic sense; or, what is perhaps a still better solution, in their despair, they were impervious to any ray of comfort, and obstinately refused to believe the glad intelligence of his reappearance.

14-22. Luke 24 : 36-49; John 20 :

unto the residue: neither believed they them.

14 "Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of

*n* Lu. 24 : 36; 1 Co. 15 : 5.

19-23. Alford well remarks on the following narration of Mark, that although evidently intended by its author, to represent what took place at one and the same time, it joins together in one, at least four appearances of our Lord: (1) that related in this verse and Luke 24 : 36-49; (2) that on the mountain in Galilee, where the words in v. 15 were spoken; (3) some unrecorded appearance, when the rest of these words (vs. 16-18) were spoken, unless we consider the whole to have been uttered on the mountain in Galilee; and (4) the appearance, which terminated with the ascension.

14. *Upbraided them, &c.* They had been credibly informed several times of his appearance, and even now, according to the parallel passage in Luke 24 : 37, they did not think that it was Jesus in bodily form who addressed them, but "were terrified, and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." Their slowness to admit this truth proves, that they did not afterwards preach a resurrection which they themselves after much hesitation had not been compelled fully to believe. *Unbelief* in respect to our Lord's repeated declaration that he should rise from the dead. See Matt. 16 : 21; Mark 9 : 9-31; 10 : 34. *Hardness of heart*, i. e. stubbornness in rejecting evidence of his resurrection, and dulness in comprehending the great truths which he had announced in reference thereto.

15. *Go ye into all the world.* See N. on Matt. 28 : 19. *All the world.* The whole habitable world, contrasted here with the Jewish nation, to which their labors had been restricted in their first commission. See Matt. 10 : 5, 6. *Preach the gospel.* Proclaim the glad news of

heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

15 ° And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, ° and preach the gospel to every creature.

o Mat. 23 : 19; Jn. 15 : 16. p Col. 1 : 23. q Jn. 3 : 18, 36; Ac. 2 : 38; Ro. 10 : 9; 1 Pe. 3 : 21.

salvation through Christ. *To every creature.* No one was to be overlooked. To all of every age and nation, pardon for sin was to be offered, on condition of their repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. "By these words the missionary office is bound upon the Church through all ages, till every part of the earth shall have been evangelized." Alford. The word *creature*, in its literal use, has a very extensive signification. It is here taken figuratively for *mankind*, as those only for whom the gospel has been provided, or who can intelligently receive it, yet even the brute creation are incidentally benefited by it, in the superior kindness of their treatment in Christian lands.

16. *He that believeth*, &c. This has reference to those who hear the preached gospel. All others are to be judged in accordance with the principle laid down in Rom. 2 : 12. The belief here required as essential to salvation, has special reference to Christ as the Savior and Redeemer of men, but embraces all the declarations of God's word which lie around this great central truth, such as human depravity, the extent and spirituality of the divine law, the need of regeneration through the Spirit, the retributions of eternity and the like. *And is baptized.* Baptism is the seal of the covenant obligation of the believer, to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ, and to walk in all his ordinances and commands. It is not a saving rite, although a duty incumbent on every believing adult, who has not been thus pledged to Christ by believing parents. *Shall be saved* from the effects of sin, viz. the wrath to come. *But he that believeth*

16 ° He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; ° but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; ° In my name shall they cast out devils;

r Jn. 12 : 48. s Lu. 10 : 17; Ac. 5 : 16.

*not*, &c. Unbelief is here declared to be the ground of condemnation. It is worthy of note, that the words, *is not baptized*, are not found in this second clause, as would have been the case, had it been a saving rite, or essential to salvation. Whether baptized or unbaptized, a man who has not the saving faith of the gospel will be lost. *Shall be damned.* This is the opposite of the salvation spoken of in the preceding clause. As that is eternal salvation, this must be eternal misery, everlasting banishment from God's presence.

17. *These signs shall follow*, i. e. shall accompany the presentation of the gospel. The miracles here referred to were all performed, to a greater or less extent, in the apostolical age of the church. *In my name.* Our Lord in his own name and authority cast out devils, but the power of the apostles to do this resided not in themselves, but was derived from him. That members of the primitive church possessed power to cast out devils, is proved from the early Fathers. See also Acts 5 : 16; 8 : 7; 16 : 18. *Shall speak with new tongues.* This refers to the gift of tongues conferred on the day of Pentecost, and also possessed by the churches planted by the apostles. Compare Acts 2 : 4; 1 Cor. 12 : 10, 28; 14 : 2, 4, 5, 13, 22, 39. These references show the extent and design of this gift of tongues. *Shall take up serpents.* See Acts 28 : 3, 5. Other instances are re-recorded in the Fathers. *If they drink any deadly thing.* The art of mixing subtle and deadly poisons, was carried by the Orientals to great perfection. The enemies of the church, doubtless, resorted often to this mode of getting rid of prominent Christians. But the

'they shall speak with new tongues;

18 <sup>u</sup> They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; <sup>r</sup> they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

19 ¶ So then, <sup>v</sup> after the Lord

*t* Ac. 2: 4; 1 Co. 12: 10, 28. *u* Lu. 10: 19; Ac. 28: 5. *w* Ac. 5: 15, 16; Ja. 5: 14, 15.

promise protected them from this evil, and we have no doubt that in many instances it was verified. *They shall lay hands*, &c. Compare Acts 3: 6, 7; 5: 15; James 5: 14. It is not to be supposed, that every member of the primitive church possessed these miraculous gifts, or that those who did, were endowed with all of them. It appears from 1 Cor. 12: 9-11, that these gifts were diversely bestowed, although by the same Spirit. They were given, as the credentials of the divine mission of the apostles and early teachers of Christianity (see 1 Cor. 14: 22). They ceased with the necessity for their exercise, or in other words, when Christianity was generally professed.

19. *After the Lord*, &c. This verse is very compendious, and evidently includes all the words spoken by our Lord, previous to his ascension. This is evident from the fact, that he did not ascend from the place where they were then assembled (v. 14), as would appear from these words of Mark, but from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1: 9). All his sayings are then compressed into this portion of Mark's gospel. In an expanded form, the narrative would

had spoken unto them, he was <sup>r</sup> received up into heaven, and <sup>a</sup> sat on the right hand of God.

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, <sup>b</sup> and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

*y* Ac. 1: 2, 3. *z* Lu. 24: 51. *a* Ps. 110: 1; Ac. 7: 55. *b* Ac. 5: 12; 1 Co. 2: 4, 5; He. 2: 4.

be: *After our Lord had spoken unto them* this and divers other things connected with their mission, and had made his appearance to them several times, *he* finally ascended from the Mount of Olives, and *was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God* (Ps. 110: 1; 1 Pet. 3: 22; Rev. 3: 21).

20. *They went forth* into the world, preaching the gospel according to their Lord's direction. *Every where*. It is the concurrent testimony of the early writers of the church, that the apostles (including Paul, who was added to their number), and their fellow laborers, preached the gospel throughout the habitable world, at least that portion of it which was then known and accessible. The apostles remained in Judea, until the divine opening of the door to the Gentiles (Acts. 10: 1-48; 11: 17, 18), and their dispersion into other lands resulting from Jewish persecutions. *Working with them*. This refers to the promise in Matthew 28: 20, "Lo I am with you always," &c. *Signs following* or attending their ministry. This refers to the miracles and gifts, mentioned in vs. 17, 18.

















# Date Due

NO 29 '49

~~NO 29 '49~~

~~MAY 2 1949~~

~~MAY 2 1949~~

~~MAY 2 1949~~

~~MAY 2 1949~~

~~MAY 2 1949~~







